PRIVATE EYE

90p

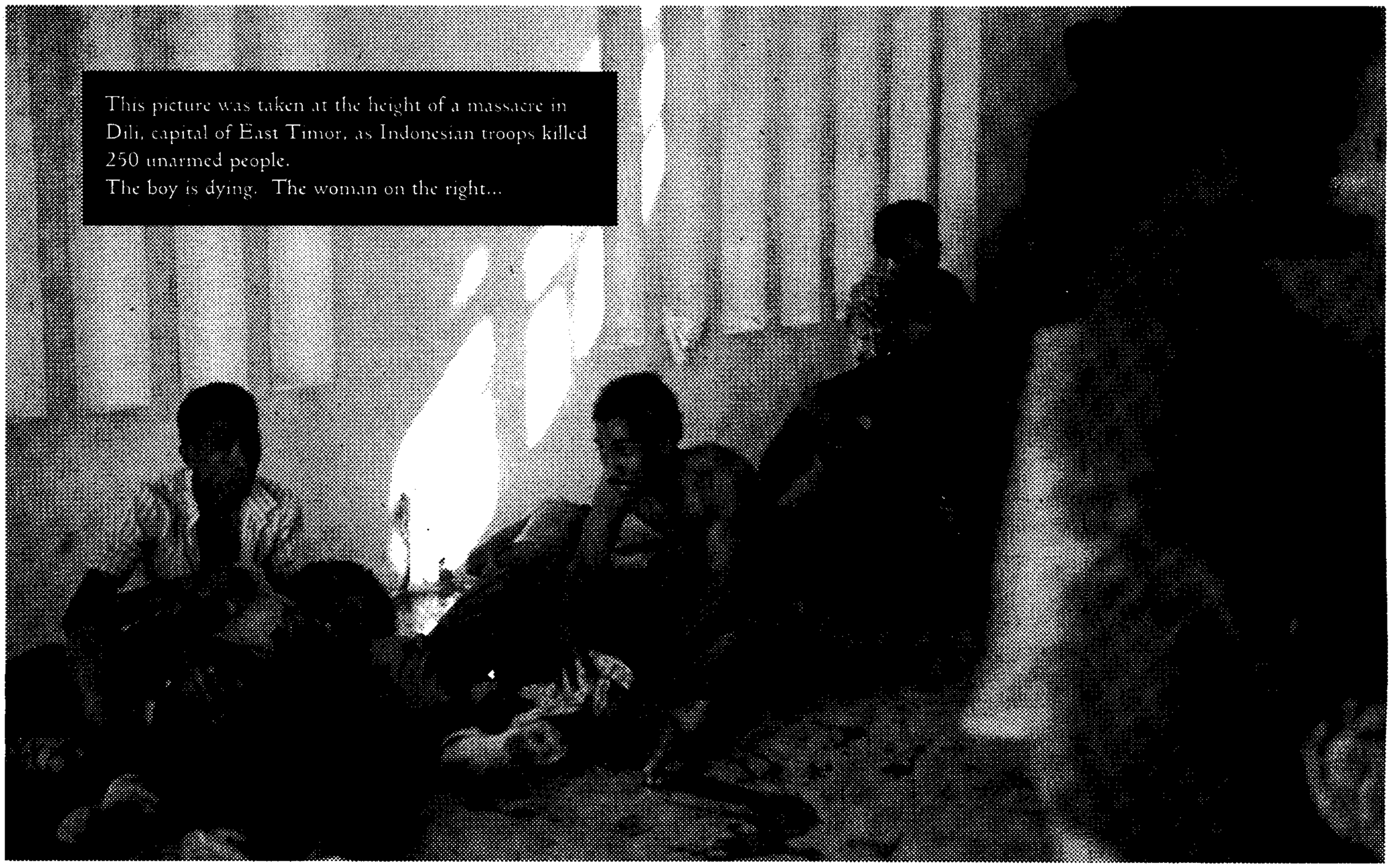
No. 843
Friday
8 April '94

GRAND NATIONAL FIASCO

And they're off! And Hezza's in front, with Portillo to his right and Fat Ken losing ground...

My leadership is secure

I support you, John


This picture was taken at the height of a massacre in Dili, capital of East Timor, as Indonesian troops killed 250 unarmed people.
The boy is dying. The woman on the right...

How embarrassing.

THE scene is Dili, East Timor, a territory forcibly occupied by Indonesia since 1975. It is 12 November, 1991. The time is 8am.

A crowd of East Timorese, including children are gathered in a cemetery to mourn a friend's killing and call for independence.

Without warning, Indonesian troops open fire on the crowd. People run. As bullets strike scores fall dying.

A foreign film crew and an English photographer are among the crowd. As the shooting starts, the photographer dives into an open crypt through which bullets are ripping.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BRITISH SECTION

At the instant of this picture, he is flattened against a wall, his body shielding a heap of children older children lying on younger ones to protect them.

Five feet away, the boy in his friend's arms is dying. Another behind them lies dead.

The blurred shape on the right is a woman who has just run into the crypt. The dark marks on her face and clothes are blood. If you were there, you'd see that a chunk of her face is shot away.

If this picture were in colour, all you would notice is blood.

Indonesia: the chilling facts.

This massacre in East Timor is only a tiny part of the terror that has gripped Indonesia itself since 1965, when the military, led by General Suharto, siezed power.

Inside a year, up to a million people had been murdered by, or with the compliance of, the military. In Java in the mid-1980s, 5 thousand people were killed by government death squads. In these 'mysterious killings', mutilated corpses were left on the streets to rot. President Suharto described this as 'shock therapy'.

Within the last five years, 2,000 civilians have been killed in Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra. Near the village of Alue Mira, Aceh, in July 1993, Amnesty reported a grave containing some two hundred bodies.

Indonesia's Major General Pramono said about this, 'I don't think it could have been two hundred bodies. It's hard to tell with arms and heads all mixed up.' Few other nations are so casual about mass murder.

Amnesty's unheeded warnings.

In nearly 30 years of tracking the Indonesian Government, Amnesty has recorded imprisonment without trial, political murder, killing of petty criminals, execution of the old and the sick, torture, rape, 'disappearance' and mass murder on a staggering scale.

The regime holds on to power by a sophisticated ideological and military apparatus, courts working alongside the military to suppress dissent.

Ordinary Indonesians are afraid.

Owning the wrong book can get someone thrown in jail for years.

In November 1992, Antony Ginting, a bus conductor from Deli Tue, North Sumatra, was abducted by police who beat him, rubbed chillis in his eyes, burned him with cigarettes, urinated in his face, smashed his fingers with a hammer, stabbed his head with a screwdriver and shot him 12 times in the legs. The reason? They suspected him of theft.

Year after year, Amnesty has warned

the world's leaders. Again and again, they have turned a deaf ear.

Mass murder in East Timor.

East Timor is the eastern half of the island of Timor, 400 miles north of Australia.

It was invaded by Indonesia in 1975, since when at least 200,000 East Timorese, one-third of the population, have died.

Recently, at the National Film Theatre, John Pilger's film 'Death of a Nation' - about the fate of the East Timorese - was previewed before an invited audience.

The film had run less than five minutes when a series of brutal images erupted across the screen - the audience was seeing footage of the cemetery massacre.

As the auditorium filled with screams of wounded and dying people - sounds our photograph can't convey - a man in the audience began to curse.

Massacre? What massacre?

At Amnesty we know every frame of this grisly footage by heart.

On the day of the massacre, our Urgent Action Network swung into action and thousands of people poured faxes, telegrams and letters of protest in to the Indonesian Government. Within 48 hours Amnesty had flashed two detailed reports to governments around the world.

The governments did nothing.

Emboldened by the lack of action, the Indonesians claimed that only 19 people had died. They dismissed Amnesty's reports as lies.

On screen, John Pilger was questioning Indonesia's Ambassador to the UN, Nugroho Wisnumurti.

Pilger: *The statement by Amnesty International described the situation in East Timor as one of arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance, executions and massacre. Are they lying?*

Wisnumurti's face filled the screen as he replied, *'Despite that statement, have you seen people being shot?'*

The audience, which had just seen the film of the cemetery massacre, gave vent to disbelieving laughter. The man at the back of the cinema screamed 'Liar! Liar!'

Hypocrisy in high places.

If Indonesian politicians are clumsy with the truth, ours have got hypocrisy down to a fine art.

First John Major argues that poor countries should spend more on basic human needs - and less on arms. Then, barely two years after the Dili massacre, his government agrees to sell Indonesia 40 Hawk military jets.

Whitehall says the Hawks won't be used against civilians. How can they be sure?

Especially when Indonesia's Trade & Industry Minister has stated that, 'the planes will not only be used to train pilots but also for ground attack'.

For God's sake, what kind of morality is it where sleeping with an actress can get a minister hounded from office, but it's okay to sell lethal weapons - without any guarantee that they won't be used to kill innocent people?

The cynicism of realpolitik extends right into the UN Commission on Human Rights, of which Indonesia is a member.

When Amnesty visited the Commission in Geneva last month, the governments to whom we spoke told us they would pursue a policy of 'quiet diplomacy'.

They might as well go fishing.

The picture on this page is the result of thirty years of 'quiet diplomacy'. No wonder governments are embarrassed.

'Shut up!'

In the cinema, the man in the audience had begun interrupting virtually every sentence, screaming his frustration.

People began ssshhhing. 'Shut up', someone hissed, 'we're trying to watch a film.'

But this man wasn't watching a film, he was watching his life. Later, he apologised and the audience learned that he was East Timorese and three of his brothers had been killed by the Indonesians.

At Amnesty we know how that man feels. Year after year we shout and scream - and people don't want to hear.

Of the millions of people who see this photograph today, few will remember it tomorrow. Fewer still will think about what it means. If you'd been there and seen with your own eyes what happened in that cemetery, you'd have come home and started your own campaign for those people. No question.

What will you do now?

If you read on you must join us.

In a moment, we'll invite you to join us and help us try again to stop the terror.

Most people will ignore us and turn the page.

Before you do the same, let us tell you the rest of the story of this photograph.

When the shooting stopped, soldiers came into the crypt, dragged out the photographer, kicked and beat him. He never saw what happened to the others.

But according to an East Timorese exile, 'After they stopped shooting, those who had survived, the ones who could have been saved because they were only wounded in the legs and arms, they were stabbed with bayonets, the ones still inside the cemetery who were still breathing but lying on the ground, their heads were crushed with rocks until they died.'

Can you still turn the page?

If you knew how much good you could do just by joining us - you wouldn't hesitate. So if you've read this far and you're not already a member of Amnesty, we ask you again, please cut the coupon.

Don't do it tomorrow, do it today. Don't have a cup of coffee first. Do it now. If you can't find a pen, pick up the phone.

But do it now.

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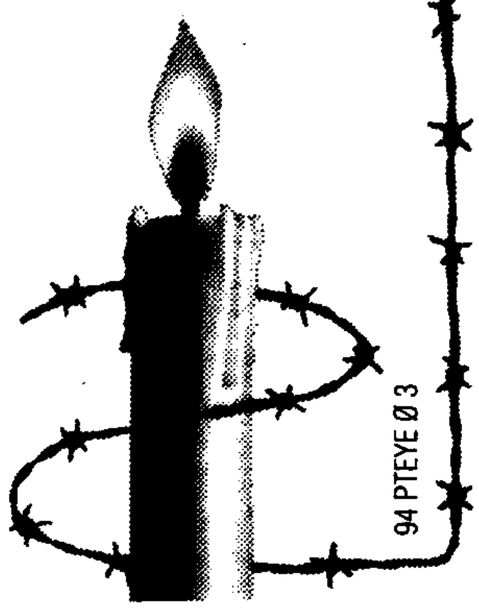
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



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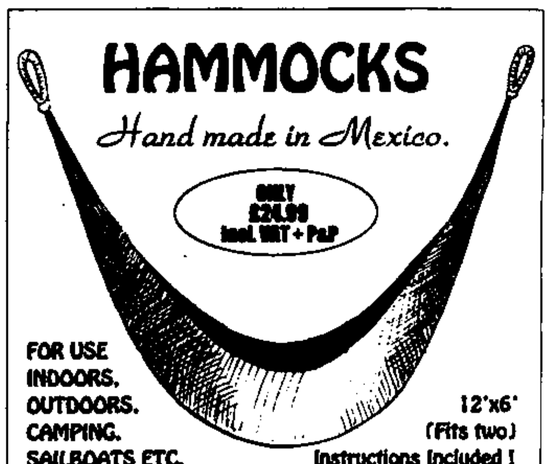

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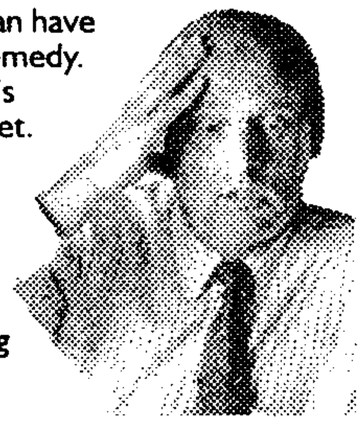

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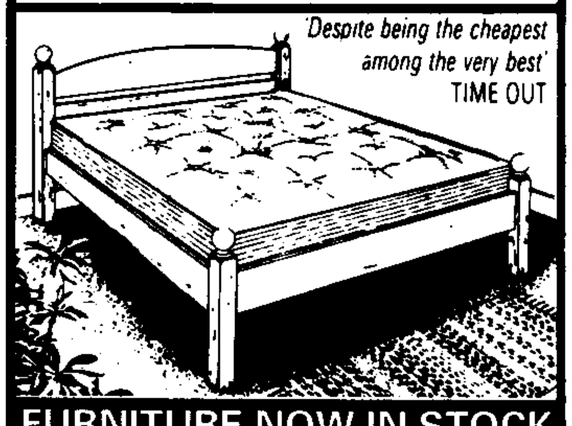

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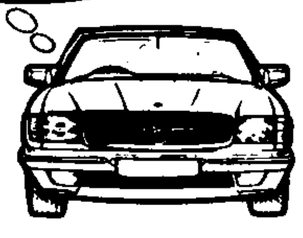

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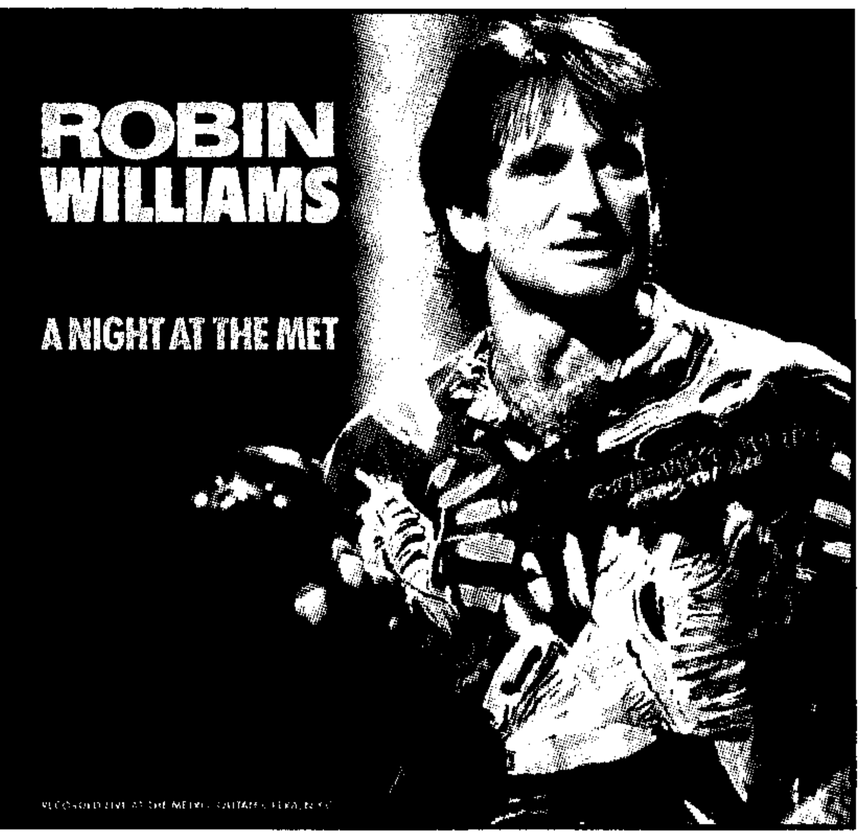

Gnome

I AM delighted to see that the French government has backed down over its crass and insensitive decision to turf out D-Day veterans from their hotels in favour of VIPs, journalists and assorted media organisations.

This represents a victory for the veterans and, of course, a victory for this newspaper.

The Daily Gnome has never been one to blow its own trumpet, but I think everyone is agreed on this occasion that, had it not been for our tactful silence over the whole matter, the 80-year-old veterans would have been reduced to sleeping rough on the beaches of Normandy.

The Daily Gnome's decision not to run the story at all was undoubtedly what tipped the balance in the veterans' favour. Keen as I am to give credit to the British and Canadian ex-servicemen who kicked up the fuss, the French veterans' organisations that took their side and the French media which fiercely attacked the French government over the matter, at the end of the day it does have to be said that the entire triumph must be laid at the door of myself.

Without the Daily Gnome's timely lack of coverage there would have been no happy ending to this story.

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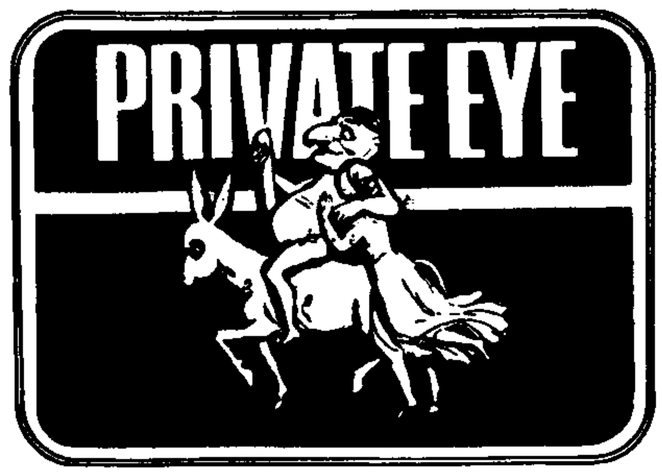


COLOUR SECTION

WHO IS to blame for the catastrophe that engulfed the prime minister and the government over new voting arrangements in the enlarged European Union?

The issue could easily have been side-stepped. No one who attended the huge meeting of the Tory backbench foreign affairs committee on 16 March — attended by an extraordinary 180 MPs and addressed by Douglas Hurd — got any warning of the storm ahead.

Hurd gave a lugubrious performance, stressing on the one hand the importance of the four new countries joining the EU, and on the other the new significance of the voting arrangements after the Maastricht treaty, which designated so much more decision-making to the EU.

Sir Terence Higgins, a former treasury minister, always loyal to the government and if anything a pro-European, asked if the new voting arrangements could be postponed to 1996 when the whole question of European Union organisation is up for grabs again.

Hurd explained politely that that probably wasn't possible, and that the new arrangements would have to be decided before the end of the year. The meeting ended with a display of unity and relief. Neither the weak pro-Europe left, which regards Hurd as an ally, nor the angry anti-Europe right represented by the Fresh Start Group (chairman: Sir Michael Spicer) thought the issue worth fighting over.

The decision to "talk tough" on the blocking votes issue was taken in Mr Major's office. He was impressed by pleas from backbenchers for something strong to enthuse constituency parties. Most parties hold their annual general meetings at the end of the financial year, in the last two weeks of March. Many such meetings coincided with the special Tory party conference called to rally the flagging troops in the centre of Paddy Ashdown's newly-claimed territory — at Plymouth.

Somehow, someone — almost certainly the prize booby of recent times, Sir Norman Fowler — convinced Major that the voting issue in Europe was "good for a bluster". After all, it was argued, the issue need not be decided at once. The four new countries were not due to join the EU until January 1995. Why not let them sweat while Tories cheered a tough line at Plymouth and at constituency party AGMs?

Before he put this plan into action, Major made sure he had the full support of his cabinet. The right — the "gang of four", Lilley, Howard, Portillo and Redwood — of course voted for him with enthusiasm. Heseltine and Clarke, no doubt sensing that any disaster would not rebound on them, fell into line. The entire cabinet voted for the strategy.

No wonder, then, Major went happily to the Commons to denounce John Smith as "Monsieur Oui, the poodle of Europe". No one doubted after that, and subsequent Major speeches, notably at Plymouth, that the British would delay enlargement at least for several months if they didn't get the blocking vote they wanted.

It was all hogwash. The European majority insisted on the enlargement programme. They tossed a tiny sop to Hurd, who came back and told the cabinet there could be no delay. The troops, high on the top of the hill, had to be marched down again. The pro-Europe group was angry at the sleight to the EU; the anti-Europe group angry at the sell-out they had not predicted or expected. The whole strategy was a disaster for the new Monsieur Oui, the prime minister — and no one's fault but his own.

MAJOR NOW pins his only hope of survival on holidays. He feels rescued by the Easter recess, which is followed quickly by a May Day bank holiday (happily for him not yet abolished by his government) and another recess at Whitsun.

Not content with that, he plans to extend the MPs' already enormous summer holidays by two weeks so the "grumblers" can get off early into the sunshine.

But no amount of holidays can obscure the next two obstacles on the European horizon.

The first and less problematical is the legislation required for the new voting arrangements in the union. This will probably be a one-line bill in early November, which will be bitterly fought by the Fresh Start group and others.

The second, far far worse, is the "cohesion fund" agreed by Major in what was meant to be his triumphant presidency of the European summit at Edinburgh. Under these arrangements, money paid to the British government in VAT is to be turned over to the European Commission for spending in lower-income countries such as Spain and Greece.

In the year that VAT is first imposed on fuel in Britain, ostensibly to rescue the domestic economy, the argument that some VAT paid by British taxpayers must be spend abroad may not go down too well in the Tory heartlands.

CONFUSION reigns in Birmingham legal circles where magistrates keep being moved from the bench to the dock.

The latest JP to be caught out is Birmingham city Labour councillor Nam Dev Bagla. He has just been convicted of helping to cash more than £150,000-worth of stolen disability vouchers.

He cashed them in the names of A. Schwarzenegger, S. Stallone, M. Jagger, J. Major, T. Rex and A. Snake at the sub-post office he ran with his wife. He tried to blame his wife, claiming he was always out working for the council, but the jury didn't believe him.

Meanwhile another JP, Derek Bishop, has quit the city for California leaving debts of more than £80,000 behind him, including £4,000 owed to a college for the blind.

Last year Stanley Jefferson, chairman of the licensing magistrates, was jailed after an investigation into massive fraud on his magistrates' expenses forms. Most of the money, he told the court, went on buying drinks for fellow JPs.

"It's the last time we play the stock market"

Street Of Shame

ALL THE world knows about the "house of horror" in Gloucester. Now there is news of a "hotel of horror" in the district.

The horror is no reflection of the quality of service at the Hatton Court in Upton St Leonards, a couple of miles outside the city — but on the antics of some of the clientele, who include many of the hacks despatched to Gloucester to cover the murder inquiry.

The beleaguered hotel staff got their initiation into press ethics when a thirsty tabloid hack, who was not even staying at the Hatton Court, wandered into the bar and filched a pile of blank bar-bills, no doubt with a view to some creative work on his expenses.

When a female assistant manager ordered him to put them back, he replied: "What do you want me to do — drop my jeans and show you my cock?" Eventually, after being told that the police would be called, the gentleman of the press grudgingly returned the receipts. Before being bundled out of the hotel, he had the cheek to demand a mini-cab to take him home — a request that was firmly refused.

Worse was to come. Late one Saturday, after a night on the town, several of Fleet Street's finest wandered back to the Hatton Court in the company of some young ladies they had met in the course of the evening. Hearing a commotion from one of the bedrooms in the early hours, hotel staff discovered a scene of wild devastation: a shower had been torn from the wall, the bed was on its side, etc, etc. The police, already overburdened with duties at the murder house, had to be called in to discipline the revellers.

One hack present at this latter occasion was Nick Farrell of the *Sunday Telegraph*. When the *Eye* approached him, however, he began muttering menacingly about libel lawyers. "I'd be very careful what you write," he warned. After further prodding, he finally issued a statement of sorts: "Any damage in that hotel that night wasn't done by me... Whatever happened didn't happen in my room... I was in another room in which it is alleged a shower was damaged. But I'm not going to say any more."

WHILE the *Observer* plumbs new depths in its search for advertising revenue, the *Guardian* is trying frantically to redress the balance.

The Indonesia colour dropout (SUHARTO — YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD OPPRESSOR) was followed by two heavyweight *Guardian Weekend* features in the two weeks after by John Pilger (12 Feb) and Robert McCrum (19 Feb) reflecting the true Indonesia and the East Timorese struggle.

In March it was Nigeria's turn for a glossy, investment-begging brochure. The inside page proclaimed "Democracy still the goal" while the sub-head grudgingly admitted, er, "No date for elections as yet".

Funnily enough a date *was* set for elections — February — until the regime that undoubtedly financed the brochure in the *Obs* "took over" in November. Happily the text informs us that General Abacha, the new leader, "has announced a campaign to clean up Nigerian politics." What better way than by scrapping elections, whose untidy ballot papers mess the place up?

Readers who take more than one Sunday paper might have read in the same day's *Independent on Sunday* a feature on the current state of Africa in which Nigeria was given 0 out of 10 for her democratic prospects. "A dictatorship in which the individual has no rights" was the verdict. Still, if they want to advertise, who cares?

THE London *Evening Standard* recently published a letter deriding its crusty columnist Peter McLie.

It was signed by one "Robin Graft". Surely the paper's letters editor cannot have failed to notice that Robin Graft is an anagram of "boring fart"?

***SUN* executives held a high-powered "think tank" at a hotel in Wimbledon last week — the main event being a taxing session of "Ibble Dibble" played in the hotel lounge.**

There were stiff forfeits — including face blackening with burnt cork — for those who failed to say the words correctly, and James Pyatt, the *Sun*'s ever thoughtful news editor, ended up black faced and drinking lager upside down while standing on his head.

This may well be how *Sun* executives have all their best ideas, but the throng were disappointed when Pyatt then collapsed. Picture editor Kenny Lennox was sent to his room to get a camera to record the spectacle — but on arrival he collapsed as well.

The slimming editor, who did not want burnt cork on her face because it would spoil her make-up, agreed to have it smeared over her naked breasts instead.

THE whip-round for the very popular Jonathan Miller, who has resigned as media correspondent of the *Sunday Times*, might have been a disappointment had it not been for the unexpected generosity of associate editor Tony Rennell.

The generosity was unexpected even by Rennell himself, who flourished a £20 note, the only denomination he had, hoping to withdraw a tenner and a fiver in change from the collection envelope. Sadly, the contribution of the entire newsroom ran to a mere handful of coins.

Although Miller will still pen a column for the paper, he plans to resume his duties as a corporate executive in Murdoch's evil empire.

O·B·N

Of course it is very pleasant for an editor to be left alone by his newspaper's owners. And it is clearly a good thing for truth, democracy, the shareholder and the reader when a good, wise and well-informed editor is left to do his job in peace by a benign, intelligent and handsome proprietor. But not all newspapers are run like *The Sunday Telegraph*.

TOM UTLEY
Sunday Telegraph

Submitted by Les Waterhouse.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

AT CANNONS gym in the City, glamorous Mirror Group boss Amanda Platell is overheard discussing a change in her fitness programme with her personal trainer. At the end of the session, the trainer helps her on with her rather large overcoat. "Why are you wearing this?" he asks. "Is it to cover your pregnancy?"

If true, Ms Platell must hope she does not fall foul of the Mirror Group's new attitude to pregnant employees, as revealed by the recent case of *People* reporter Jane Preston, who was sacked just as she prepared to go on maternity leave (see last *Eye*).

Still, readers should await confirmation before knitting bootees, for pregnancy tests are not always accurate — as Amanda knows better than most. Last summer one of her newspapers, the *People*, revealed that Princess Anne was expecting. Alas, seven months later there is still no sign of a royal bulge.

JUST FANCY THAT

"I went shopping for Easter eggs the other day and a lady approached me and asked if I was Anne Diamond."

— Anne Diamond, Daily Mirror, 14 April 1993.

"I was at the till in a clothes shop when the assistant said loudly: 'Here. You look just like that Anne Diamond!'"

— from the first Sun column by Anne Diamond, "a sparkling new voice in the Sun", 18 March 1994.

PORKY PORN baron David "The Slug" Sullivan has told a few porky pies in his time, but one of the biggest was when he told millions of TV viewers about his new "decent family newspaper", the Sunday *News & Echo*.

Launching originally in the North-west and Yorkshire in September 1992, Sullivan and editor Tony Livesey promised a wholesome, tit-free product in sharp contrast to its ultra-filthy stablemates, the *Daily* and *Sunday Sport*.

But Sullivan, who had breathed life into the paper with his dirty cash, was soon extinguishing its chances of success. Alarmed that it wasn't stealing enough readers from rivals such as the *News of the Screws* and the *Sunday Mirror*, the impatient proprietor began demanding more smut. "I very much want a sex cover this week," he wrote in a memo to Livesey two months after the launch.

The editor took up his boss's suggestion with enthusiasm. One of the earliest and least tasteful of his "sex covers" was a nude picture of the late *Coronation Street* actress Pat Phoenix, taken before her death from cancer. The paper told the story of a woman who had sold the photo to a sleazy tabloid — which turned out to be the *Sunday Spurt*, no less. In fact, the *News & Echo* had jointly bought the pic with the *Spurt*. "Yes, we paid for it," Livesey confirmed to the *Eye* last week, "just as we'd pay for any pictures of a naked celebrity."

Not content with dictating the paper's editorial content, Sullivan began foisting his bimbos on it as well. One such was Trina Michelson, who turned up as the *News & Echo*'s agony aunt, billed as someone who "has been through hell, so she'll understand". It was not revealed what this hell was.

In fact, she is the same woman who, calling herself "Trine" Michelson, boasted to *Spurt* readers in 1989 and 1990 that "I've bonked a thousand fellas". She also claimed in the *Sunday Spurt* that she had been "drugged, gang-banged and raped by a 15-strong pack of slobbering jet-set studs".

"Certain degrading details of Trine's horrific ordeal in the clutches of a rampant pack of sex animals proved just too much for a family newspaper like *Sunday Sport*," the paper explained at the time. "The stunning beauty queen's full graphic account of her sickening gang-bang hell would, we feel, not be acceptable. But the brave model insisted Britain knows every single sordid moment of the drug-induced orgy when 15 men raped her... so if you want to hear Trine tell her own shocking sex-posé just dial 0836..."

Unfortunately, after hiring Ms Michelson as his new agony columnist, Livesey was unable to find a picture of her with her clothes on — so he cropped a nude photo of her below the neck instead.

It's all a far cry from the speech by Livesey on launch night, when he climbed on a table and told the assembled staff that Fleet Street papers would soon be scuttling back to the north in the hope of emulating the *News & Echo*'s success. Its circulation now is almost invisible to the naked eye. "Things are hard, but we're battling away," Livesey cheerily assured us last week. Meanwhile, as a reward for his endeavours, he has been promoted to group managing editor for Sullivan's entire sty (*Shurely "stable"? Ed*) of "newspapers".

HALLO!

The new heartwarming column

HALLO! AS HE continues to resist the British government's invitation to return to London and stand trial, that much-maligned philanthropist Asil Nadir tells us that he faces a new difficulty in his life: he may soon be pursued by the even more fearsome officers of the Child Support Agency.

This follows a declaration by the high court last month that he is indeed the father of a "love child" by one Canan Butner, a Turkish woman living in London.

After the son was born, in June 1988, Nadir installed Mrs Butner and her baby in a flat in Wimpole Street, which was then bought by one of his Cayman-registered companies, Hayford Ltd. He also paid her £1,000 a month in maintenance. But in 1990 the payments became more and more irregular, and since 1991 she has received nothing. Meanwhile, the administrators of Polly Peck International are trying to evict her from the flat, claiming that it was bought with Polly Peck money.

Mrs Butner has brought proceedings against Nadir in the English courts, but is hampered by the fact that an order here can't be enforced in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. So she has now sent a heart-rending letter to the president of the republic, urging him to make Nadir face his paternal responsibilities. "Mr Nadir pays no attention to one of the most sacred obligations," she writes, "namely that of a father to look after and sustain his son. Surely there cannot be any more shameful thing for a man to try to do..."

Poor Mr Nadir's problems do not end there. It was revealed recently that he fathered another two children by one Lesley Ellwood. As he points out, if he has committed a sin, it is merely that he has so much love to give that he had to spread it rather widely.

JUST FANCY THAT

DEATH PLOT WIFE JAILED

Hillary: Huge profit

Hillary's 'bent deal'

Today, page 15 31.3.94

Eyles: 'Calculating'

Today, page 15 31.3.94

HALLO! SHARON STONE, the gifted actress whose sensitive portrayal of a woman uncrossing her legs in *Basic Instinct* had male critics reaching for their penises (*Don't you mean "pens"? The M.*), talks exclusively to Hallo! about her career.

Undaunted by last year's box office disappointment of *Sliver* and her very sensitive portrayal of a woman masturbating in the bath, the feisty Ms Stone has no time for her detractors.

When during filming recently a director asked her if she could think herself into her role a little more, she responded bluntly that she was an instinctive actress. "I act with my c***," she said.

"Then it's a pity", replied the boorish type, "that your c*** isn't more like Meryl Streep's."

HALLO! WE WERE delighted to see Lady Patricia Hollis, Labour's frontbench spokesperson on health in the Lords, chatting with Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, at a glittering soirée in London recently.

Both had much to talk about — including the government's controversial plan to close so many London hospitals.

Clearly the conversation made a huge impression on Ginny, for three times in the Commons the health secretary has turned on Labour MPs who have criticised the plan, telling them roundly to take more notice of Lady Hollis.

Ginny left the soirée with the impression that she had found something of a sympathetic ear, for when she asked Lady Hollis what she *really* thought about reorganising the capital's hospitals, the reply came: "In my capacity as the opposition spokeswoman for health I have to oppose the government."

Misguided Labour MPs are now demanding that John Smith sack Lady Hollis as a treacherous virago. Really!

Desmond Lynam asks How Do They Do That? BBC1, 8pm.

Herts local TV guide

HALLO! *JOHN MAJOR, our embattled prime minister, is keen to have some really decent new photographs taken of himself so he doesn't invite Hallo! into his luxury Whitehall home to do the job properly.*

Instead he asks the award-winning Sunday Times contract photographer Sally Soames, in the hope that her official snaps will show him at his steely and determined best.

Sadly, Ms Soames's editor, the fun-loving Andrew Neill, is backing Michael Heseltine to take the Tory leadership from Mr Major and so refuses to let Soames take the freelance assignment.

HALLO! TO WALES, where loyal subjects are putting out bunting to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Prince of Wales's investiture.

Charles is so popular here that a heavy police presence is needed whenever he appears. In Cardiff on St David's Day, police took no chances — and outnumbered his subjects on four out of five of his engagements!

The prince will visit each of Wales's eight counties, and following the success in Cardiff his PR team has been shitting bricks (*Shurely "scoring hits"? The Marquesa*) in the local media.

A month after the *Western Mail* ran a full page setting out maps and dates of his visits, the exercise was repeated in a full-page "advertising feature" surrounded by paid ads from ordinary people like the army, the RAF and the Prince's Trust.

Sadly there are a few bitter and twisted Welsh peasants who won't be lining the royal route. An opinion poll found that a tiny minority — ie more than half the Welsh — thought Charles had done a really poor job. What phooey.

'The Marquesa'

Pseuds Corner

Like Cathleen Moreland (sic) in *Northanger Abbey*, I have wanted all my life to live in a Gothic castle, Revival rather than Mediaeval — or, better still, both — with plenty of towers, turrets, machicolations, dim passages, newel staircases, a chapel, a piscine, an aumbry and a flushing garderobe, not forgetting squints, meurtrières and a solar.

PAUL JOHNSON
Spectator

Claudia [Schiffer] is not a sensuous person. She is an intellectual hungry for knowledge, and she seeks truth and a certain kind of safety in the studying of books.

Elle Top Model

Set Dai Smith's *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales* against Hamish Henderson's *Alias MacAlias*, and watch the dialectic of lunchtime, on Barry Island, bite into the page. The politics of both books are out of that 'civic virtue' which was, at its best, the *soi-disant* Celtic communist tradition — spinning Gwyn Thomas's "folk tales from the modern Welsh" in an odd but fricative parallel with the 7th century Aneurin conjuring the Gododdin out of a Forth-to-Severn empire. To call it Gramscian will do for the moment — particularly as the wee man's followers have held the line against a "New Times" capitalism curdling into fascism — but it's something more.

CHRISTOPHER HARVIE
Guardian

ABSTRACT In this paper we think about the performance of sexual identities in space, and try to explore the notions of transgression and parody implicit in recent queer theory, particularly in the work of Judith Butler. To do this, we take a long hard look at two current dissident sexual identities — the hypermasculine 'gay skinhead' and the hyperfeminine 'lipstick lesbian'. We describe their evolution as sexual-outlaw styles of the 1990s, and assess the effects of their performance in spaces which are, we argue, actively constructed as heterosexual. Although we are ultimately unsure and unable to agree about what kinds of trouble these identities cause, and for whom, and where, we want to share our unease, our questions, our own troubles.

DAVID BELL, JON BINNIE & JULIA CREAM, GILL VALENTINE, "All Hyped Up and No Place To Go", Gender, Place and Culture, a Journal of Feminist Geography

I wonder why so many letters in The Observer are overwhelmingly full of gloom, criticism or dismissive indignation. For me, there is much to be thankful for, although I shall only mention friends and great music. The former clasp the heart and the latter surrounds everything in spiritual sunshine. I have a combination of both in the peerless German opera singer Jochen Kowalski, whose sumptuous voice and friendship add splendour to my otherwise insignificant life.

BRIAN COURT-MAPPIN
Letter to The Observer

CONTRIBUTORS: A. Bird, B. Walker, J. Cooper, R. Webb, J. Cheshire.

£10 paid for entries

IF THE public doesn't understand what is happening on the railways, nor does the government's last transport secretary, Malcolm Rifkind.

In a recent letter to the Railway Development Society, Rifkind said: "As you know there is no proposal to privatise the railways. Rather, it is the Government's intention to encourage private sector involvement... infrastructure will remain in the public sector."

The society then received another letter, this time from the office of Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP for Edinburgh West and a junior Scottish office minister. It said, among other things: "That is why the government believe that rail privatisation is good news for passengers."

Douglas-Hamilton is probably better informed. As Scottish office minister for roads, he will steer a large road upgrading programme to cope with the extra traffic resulting from rail privatisation — or if you prefer, non-privatisation. Even before the "franchising" balloon went up on April Fools' Day, the programme had already wrecked the planned renewal of the London to Glasgow mainline, as well as a large order for new trains for Strathclyde.

NEARLY all Labour MPs — David Blunkett and a few others apart — feel that the nurse who explained to a small child what a "blow job" and a "Mars party" meant at a sex education class in Leeds has been the victim of an ignorant witch hunt.

A few, however, recognising that the chair of governors at Highfield primary school, Anne O'Brien, was a Tory, could not resist attacking both the nurse and Ms O'Brien in a pathetic early-day motion.

The Labour MPs who signed the motion in ignorance of the facts are: Derek Fatchett; John Gunnell; John Battle; George Mudie; Kevin Barron; Terry Rooney; David Clelland; Harry Barnes; Michael Connarty; Jim Dowd; Jimmy Dunnachie; Derek Enright; Peter Hardy; Bridget Prentice; Gerry Steinberg; and Dennis Turner.

SAD NEWS reaches Backbiter of a difference of opinion between two neighbouring Labour MPs in the Coventry area, Bill Olner and Geoffrey Robinson.

Both have been approached by distressed workers at an aluminium foundry in the area, A.L. Dunn and Co, who have been told their company is "relocating" to southern Ireland and that few if any of them will be welcome in the new "culture".

For some reason the workers feel the new "culture" may mean lower wages and the almost total absence of trade unions.

Mr Olner, in whose Nuneaton constituency the foundry is, approached Mr Robinson, in Coventry North West. He pointed out that A.L. Dunn and Co is a subsidiary of Transfer Technology Group PLC, whose chairman happens to be the aforesaid Geoffrey Robinson.

Mr Robinson failed to satisfy Mr Olner with his account of the dispute and his own responsibility in the matter. The exchange which followed (though it took place in the hallowed precincts of Westminster) was disturbingly excitable. At one awful moment it even deteriorated into threats of violence.

The quarrel, unhappily, has not been patched up. But Mr Robinson can perhaps console himself at his new home in Hampshire's Test Valley. The grade one listed Marsh Court, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, has 15 main bedrooms, a billiard room, staff quarters and a swimming pool, and it cost Robinson £800,000.

If things get even worse under the Tories, the socialist Robinson can always flog his other house which isn't in Coventry — an eight-bedroom Lutyens mansion in Godalming, Surrey.

"Not good news for the prime minister – only one in ten, so far, think he's doing a good job"

IT TAKES a lot to make board of trade president Michael Heseltine and his energy gofer, Tim Eggar, feel a sense of shame — but they had plenty to hide when announcing the abandonment of a perfunctory programme to develop wave energy.

After sitting for 18 months on a study commissioned by their department of trade they finally released their response in the late afternoon of Maundy Thursday — when parliament had risen for Easter and the civil service and press were already drunk. Only *The Times* spotted what they had done.

The pair tried to justify the action on the grounds that wave energy would take too long to become a useful source. It will take even longer if they never make a start on it.

They also complain that it would be too expensive. But this is based on calculations using the treasury trick of imposing a high discount rate on the costs. This results in a shoreline unit, such as the one on Islay in the Inner Hebrides, being "costed" at 6p for a unit of electricity at 8 per cent discount rate and 9p at a mythical rate of 15 per cent. The real cost is 3p, taking account of the cost of construction and maintenance (and the "fuel", which is free). But this would be inconvenient so the government ignores it.

ALMOST everyone in Scotland is delighted to see rabid rightwinger Michael Forsyth now hoist by his own petard.

The Tory regime under Scottish secretary Ian Lang is carving up local government there with the aim of gerrymandering boundaries to give them a few winnable seats.

As parliamentary boundaries tend to follow municipal ones, the Tories are hoping for a double whammy. But the plan has come unstuck in Forsyth's Stirling, where the parliamentary boundary commission plans to move a Tory haven into the proposed new seat of Ochil.

Moving Airthrey ward — with its 2,000 Tory voters — would, even by local Tory councillors' admission, wreck Forsyth's majority of 703. Forsyth has exercised the right of all guilty men to silence and has declined to confirm that he will fight the seat at the next election.

A VIOLENT squall has ruffled the waters of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) as incredibly important Labour MPs squabble over who gets to go to South Africa to monitor the elections there.

The CPA, and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), are easily the most popular parliamentary organisations — and not surprisingly. Their executives dole out the freebie jaunts to exotic locations which enable hardworking peers and MPs to have a few days away from their lucrative directorships, all at taxpayers' expense (*Shurely "to spread the gospel of parliamentary democracy"? Ed.*)

The current row erupted when Labour whips tried to insist that they, not the CPA, would choose which Labour MPs could monitor the South African bloodbath. The issue was raised at a meeting of the parliamentary Labour party, and chief whip Derek Foster asked Jack Cunningham, shadow foreign secretary, to explain that the visit was *not* sponsored by the CPA.

One doubting Labour MP went straight to the office of the CPA, which confirmed that it *was* the sponsor and would be prepared to put this in writing. Three hours later the CPA telephoned to say that it had been instructed not to put anything in writing or make any further comment. An hour after that it emerged that there had been considerable acrimony in the CPA executive over the behaviour of the Labour whips.

Meanwhile Dianne Abbott and Bernie Grant attacked everyone concerned for not allowing a black MP to go on the jaunt. So vehement was the protest that Mrs Abbott was at the last moment included in the party.

'Backbiter'

WATER NEWS

HYPE springs eternal at Yorkshire Water — so much so that it is being investigated by the Advertising Standards Authority over its claims that it has cleaned up its act.

The company has the worst pollution record of all the hugely profitable, privatised water suppliers. But it still placed full-page advertisements in the regional press boasting of its achievements.

The ads featured two glasses of water: one taken from the source of the River Aire at Malham, the other from the same river but downstream in Leeds. Captioned "What's the difference?", the ad answered: "Not a lot."

As the National Rivers Authority pointed out, the ads could endanger public health by making people believe that the river was safe for swimming. NRA tests showed that water from Malham was pure and supported a wide range of plant and aquatic life, including trout. But once the river had passed Yorkshire Water's Esholt sewage works in Leeds it was grossly polluted with sewage "solids" and most wildlife had been wiped out.

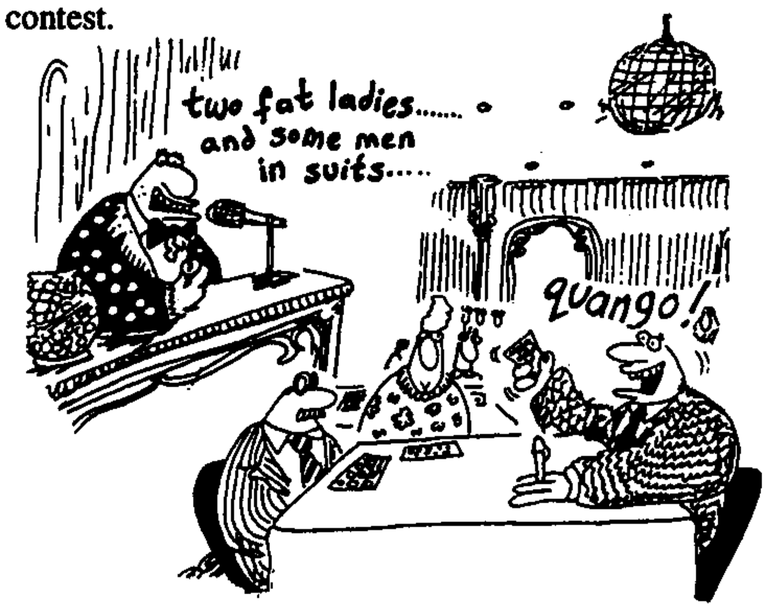
JOBS FOR THE BOYOS

BAD news in quango land, where the Welsh Development Agency's cosy policy of rewarding its own has received a setback.

In January two senior executives, David Farnsworth and Graham Moore, were given £50,000 a year jobs as managing directors of the discredited quango's west and south Wales divisions.

They won their posts against a formidable array of no opposition whatsoever, and the new chief executive, Barry Hartop, has decreed that the posts must now be thrown open to all and sundry.

The jobs are being advertised and Farnsworth and Moore have been told to reapply. Even if they were the right men for the job all along, they will still have to convince headhunters Tyzack & Partners who have been called in to referee the contest.



NOOKS and CORNERS

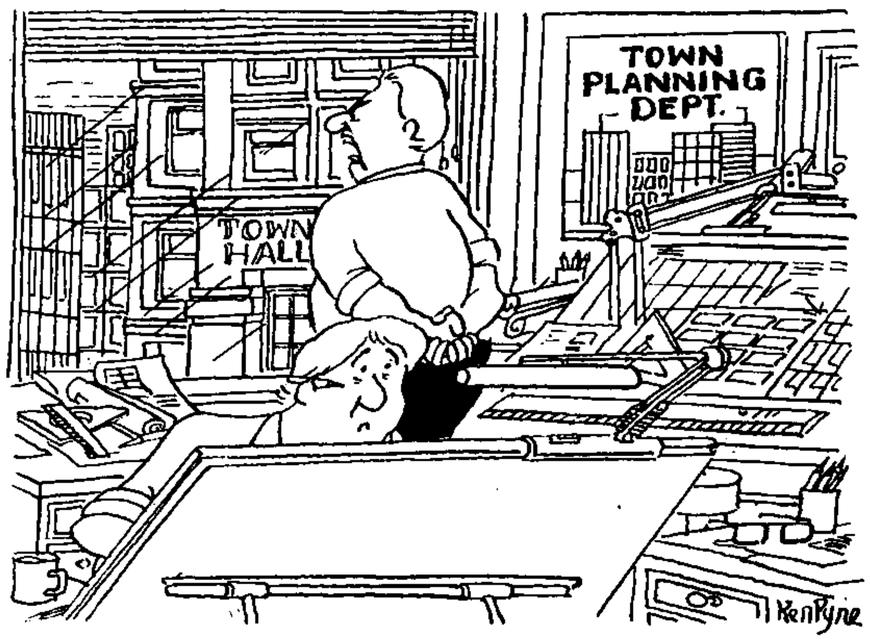
ATTENTIVE readers will have noticed that I failed to announce the Macmillan award for the worst local authority of 1993. This was not through any lack of candidates but because I was awaiting publication of a damning indictment to confirm the gravity of the crimes of the winner. That indictment has now been made.

On 8 March, the chancellor of the diocese of Southwark, Robert Gray QC, gave judgment in the case of West Norwood Cemetery. In *Eye* 825 I described how, after this magnificent landscaped Victorian cemetery had passed into the ownership of the London borough of Lambeth in 1966, the local authority had embarked on a "lawn conversion" programme which involved the wholesale destruction of thousands of fine Victorian monuments — without any record being kept. The scandal was such that the archdeacon of Lambeth petitioned for a "faculty" requiring Lambeth to restore the cemetery to its pre-1965 condition.

The church argued that the destruction meted out to the dead was as illegal as it was insensitive, West Norwood Cemetery being consecrated ground. The chancellor agreed and concluded that the 1955 LCC (general powers) act was not adequate to cover the work carried out and that Lambeth should have obtained an act of parliament to supersede the original one passed in 1836 to lay out the cemetery. As for Lambeth's odious policy of using unused space in existing graves for new burials, this was and is "wholly illegal".

The archdeacon's petition failed because it is simply impractical to return West Norwood Cemetery to its pre-Lambeth condition — too much has been destroyed by inadequately supervised council thugs. But this petition obliged Lambeth at last to petition for two faculties.

One was for a management faculty, which was granted subject to a scheme of management being approved. The other was for a confirmatory faculty — a sort of retrospective planning permission. This was granted subject to many significant conditions: that two listed memorials which "disappeared" — to Sir William Cubitt and to John Garrett — must be replaced and the damaged listed memorial to William Grane must be repaired by Lambeth; that four individual memorials referred to in the evidence must be repaired by Lambeth; that the local authority must give "all such facilities as may be required" to anybody wishing to replace destroyed memorials over the graves of Douglas Jerrold and William Bennett; and that Lambeth must comply with the requirement to supply details of the inscriptions on all memorials already removed to the registrar general.



"You know what I hate? Human beings!"

In his long judgment — lasting an hour and forty minutes — the chancellor could scarcely have been more damning of the vandalism, amateurism and cavalier incompetence displayed by the London borough of Lambeth in its "devastation" of this great "Victorian Valhalla". (He was also critical of English Heritage, whose failure to intervene obliged the archdeacon to act). In addition to their own costs and the cost of complying with the chancellor's judgment, the long-suffering council taxpayers of the people's republic will also have to fork out for the legal costs of the diocese of Southwark: at least £40,000.

AND THERE is more. After representations from the Victorian Society and English Heritage, Lambeth's apparatchiks have also now agreed to restore the people's town hall and to undo a decade's worth of crass alterations to this grade II listed Edwardian pile — built in 1906-08 by Septimus Warwick and Austen Hall — because they were all carried out without planning permission and listed building consent.

These include revolving doors, uPVC windows and glazing, security doors and, the greatest boon, an external dot-matrix display board. This, which has never worked, was installed to announce slogans to the masses in the heady days of "Red Ted" Knight.

Any private individual who vandalised a listed building without consent in this way could be sentenced in a magistrate's court to three months' imprisonment or to paying a fine of £2,000 (not enough). But Lambeth, of course, will merely pass on the expense of restitution to the masses. I do not have space here to list the many other examples of Lambeth's incompetent stewardship of historic buildings, but I am sure my readers now get the point — and yet this is one of the local authorities to which chairman Stevens would devolve English Heritage's powers over the treatment of Grade II listed buildings.

In the centenary year of that old fraud, vandal and war criminal, the murderer of Cossacks and the Euston Arch who so successfully posed as a prime minister and world statesman, what better winner could there be of the Macmillan Award than the People's Republic of Lambeth? They deserve each other.

'Piloti'

SALLY DEEDES

LAWYERS and surveyors, don'tcha just love 'em? Trevor Stuart, who bought a B&B business in Cheltenham and set out — perfectly legally — to turn it into a small hotel, isn't so sure.

A public footpath, to which Mr Stuart has access rights, runs alongside his property. Pre-sale searches failed to reveal who owned it, but the people from whom Mr Stuart bought had maintained the lane for 16 years.

Armed with legitimate planning permission, Mr Stuart began his extension works in April 1990. Out of the blue his architect then received a letter from surveyors Evans Jones requesting alterations to the works on behalf of a Mr William Bullingham (Councillor Bullingham was mayor of Cheltenham in 1990) of Cinquad Investments.

The surveyors maintained that the extension trespassed on their client's land — a right of way on to further land owned by Mr Bullingham. They asked for alterations to stop foundations going under, or guttering hanging over, the lane. Or of course Mr Stuart could solve the problem by applying for a "licence" at a suggested cost of £10,000!

Mr Stuart's architect said his plans could be amended for a lot less than that, and his builders removed the foundations that were in place.

Mr Stuart then received an application for an injunction for trespass, which was thrown out in court. Despite this — and even though Mr Stuart had met all the requirements sought — in June 1992 he learnt that the matter had been listed for trial.

Mr Bullingham then called on Mr Stuart and advised him "as a neighbour" that it would be sensible to settle rather than go to court. Mr Stuart, who hadn't a clue what he had done wrong, disagreed. Then, a week before the hearing was due, he was told that Cinquad's claim would be for the grand sum of £5 — plus costs.

Cinquad, represented by two surveyors, a solicitor and a barrister, won. So even though Mr Bullingham and Cinquad suffered no damage — well, only two cigarette packs' worth of damage — Mr Stuart is now struggling to pay the professionals' costs of £10,186. Nice work if you can get away it...

SPOOKS & SPOOKMEN

WHEN the *Independent* "revealed" the strange case of Michael Aspin, William Harper and Eric Matson, who were convicted at the Old Bailey in 1988 of fraudulently pretending to sell TOW missiles to Iran and sent to prison for varying terms (Aspin for six years), it proudly attached an "exclusive" tag to its story.

Those interested in the real meaning of the word "exclusive" should examine *Eyes* number 699, 709, 718, 773, 774, 782, 783 and 805. For starting soon after the trial on 30 September 1988 and continuing until October 1992, *Private Eye* highlighted the main points of the Aspin case.

The interest of the *Independent* has been aroused by the similarity between the Aspin trial and the Matrix Churchill scandal. John Taylor, who was acquitted, says that like Paul Henderson of Matrix Churchill, he was reporting throughout the arms deal to MI6. "When I rang my MI6 contact after the trial," he tells the *Eye*, "the phone was dead — the line had been cut off." In the best traditions of intelligence services everywhere, when the going got rough, the agents were left twisting in the wind.

William Harper, who worked at Lloyd's for Lyons Traill and Attenborough, the blue-blooded underwriters whose senior partner Sir Alan Traill was, at the time of the alleged arms deal with Iran, lord mayor of London, is appealing against his conviction. His case comes up on 12 April.

HUNT NEWS

AN *EYE* reader who is in favour of fox hunting sent us a cutting from the *Daily Torygraph* reporting that a 60-year-old retired farmer riding with the Four Burrows hunt in Cornwall had been knocked unconscious by hunt saboteurs.

"Witnesses claimed he was beaten by saboteurs — some of them were said to be armed with wooden stakes and cudgels — while trying to film them with a video camera," said the article. Our correspondent suggested that for a change we might care to publish an unbiased hunting report. Fair enough.

Sadly, it appears that the *Torygraph* did not tell the complete story of the Four Burrows hunt. For at the same meet on 12 March whipper-in Adam Ellery's horse allegedly knocked down and trampled a local saboteur, John Prescott, who was arrested by police and held in custody for three hours before being allowed to see a doctor. Following his release Prescott collapsed and was taken to hospital, where he was found to have suffered three fractured ribs and injuries which were causing him internal bleeding.

'Reynard'

EYE TV

Talking Telephone Numbers (Carlton)

SUCCESS is a strangely unquantifiable commodity in television, as the case of Carlton has recently made clear. Vastly profitable, hugely ambitious and hungry for expansion, this slavering piranha of a business has had a wonderful time since it took over Thames' weekday London franchise 15 months ago.

Ad revenues are flourishing and ratings are high. So why do viewers hate it so much? In the Perrier-fuelled hurly-burly of London's most overpriced media restaurants, you can always spot the Carlton executive: he's the tortured-looking one, agonizing over the menu and telling everyone in a loud voice that *Frank Stubbs Promotes* got great reviews.

He has no idea what Carlton is doing wrong. With all those belly-dancers and cheerleaders to gawp at between the programmes, why does everyone still pine for dowdy old Thames?

Unfortunately, the sleek-suited porpoises who run massive international multi-media concerns rarely have much time to watch television, so they have probably missed the main reason for Carlton's rock-bottom reputation. For despite all the usual promises, Carlton's programming has been so consistently mediocre that a repeat of an old *Dave Allen* series is now greeted by London viewers with heartfelt gasps of joy.

Every new show is a pale copy of someone else's past success. Even Paul Jackson, erstwhile young gun of British television, found it hard to provide a list of Carlton's achievements when pressed to on an unusually hostile *Late Show*. "*Frank Stubbs, Dave Allen*, the list goes on," he spluttered. Except that it doesn't.

Now, as if to challenge the idea that things couldn't possibly get worse, the company has come up with **Talking Telephone Numbers**, a slick, witless game show based on greed and the glowing charisma of Phillip Schofield. Most of it is hopelessly secondhand, and none of the rest is quite what it appears to be. The case for the prosecution.

● Useless idea. Schofield and Emma Forbes introduce five wacky stunts and japes, each of which generates a number between 0 and 9. Put the five numbers together and if they match the last five numbers in your telephone number, you could win £10,000.

● The only trouble is that the chances of those five numbers matching yours are about 1 in 800,. and that's assuming your five numbers are all different. (If there are duplications the probability is even smaller.) If there were 13 shows a year, you'd have a chance of winning about once every 67 years. That rather tends to erode audience interest.

● Useless idea that's also very old. Take away the gimmick and what you have left is LWT's *You Bet*. Japes and stunts not unlike those on *TTN* have been entertaining Saturday evening audiences to rather greater effect for five years. Indeed, *TTN* was originally formatted as a 60-minute show, which would have heightened the similarities with *You Bet* even further. The ITV Network Centre, in a rare spirit of mercy, said no.

● Ah yes, but it's live isn't it? No it isn't. When the announcer cries "Live from London" he just means that the last three minutes are live. The first 24 are pre-recorded.

● As for the £10,000, the same amount was recently being given away on GMTV every day.

● All of which leaves the glowing charisma of Phillip Schofield. Thus ends the case for the prosecution.

The defence would probably argue that *TTN* makes Carlton pots of money, which, with 12 million happy if mentally disadvantaged viewers, it undoubtedly does. But few programmes, even on ITV, treat its audience as patronisingly as *Talking Telephone Numbers*, or claim so much with so little to back it up.

This is contemptuous, lazy stuff, churned out in the knowledge that ITV's rump of dribbling, slack-jawed viewers will watch any old rubbish if they think they can win £10,000 out of it. Meanwhile, Carlton wonders why it's so unpopular. The legacy of Thames grows more glorious by the day.

'Couch Potato'

NOW ON TV — MORECAMBE BAYWATCH

MEDIA NEWS

AS THE *EYE* predicted, Rupert Murdoch's plans for Star, his pan-Asian satellite service, do not include BBC World Service television, which will be abruptly dropped this month.

Millions of viewers in China, Hong Kong and other areas of strong economic growth can currently get the latest news from London. But this will be replaced by a diet of Chinese (ie Beijing government-approved) films.

Murdoch has agreed to allow the BBC to continue its service to Star viewers in India for another couple of years — until he can substitute it with something else (Sky News International).

This completes a remarkable period. Six months ago Hong Kong had a pro-democracy newspaper called the *South China Morning Post*. Now, thanks to Murdoch's decision to sell the paper to a Beijing proxy, it doesn't. Currently Hong Kong and China can receive the BBC. But only for a few more days. At this rate Li Peng won't just legalise satellite dishes, he'll make them compulsory.

The losers, apart from anybody in Hong Kong and China interested in democracy, are executives at the BBC who put their trust in partnerships with Star and BSkyB. Ted Turner's CNN has already grabbed most of the spare satellite uplinks covering Asia, and Star's defection means the BBC has been effectively frozen out of a potentially lucrative market thanks to the naivety of BBC Enterprises, Bob Phillis and John Birt.

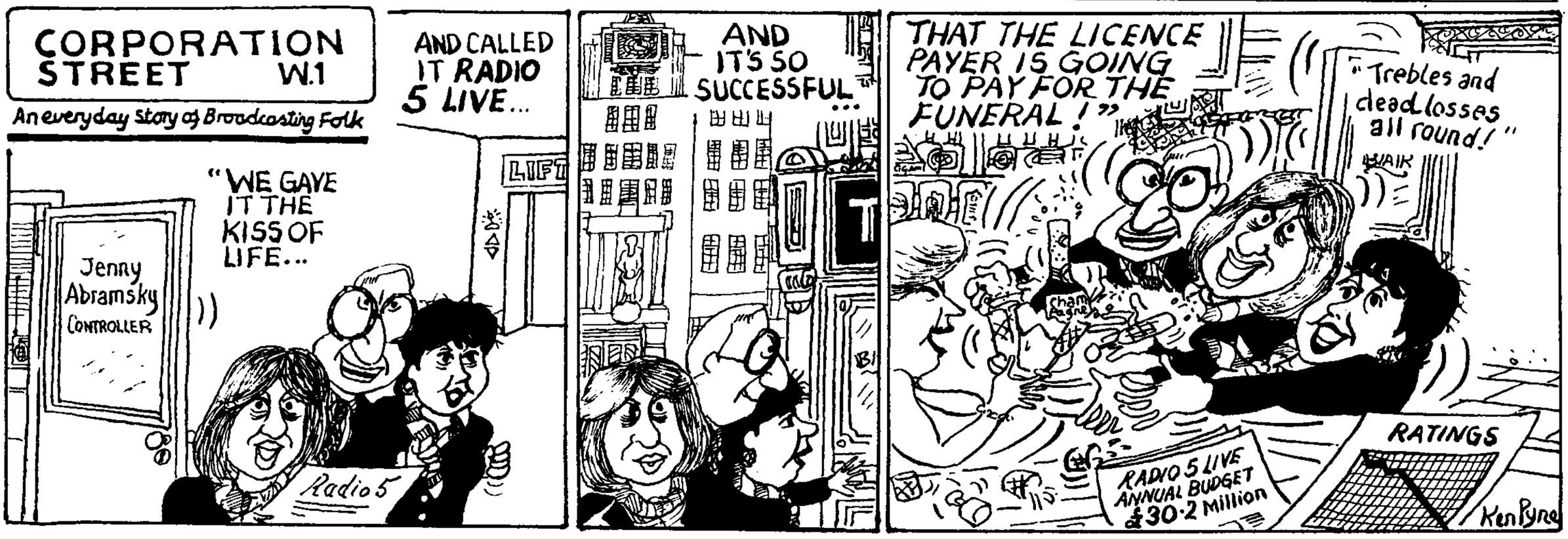
With Kelvin McKenzie settling in at BSkyB, it can only be a matter of time before Murdoch's willingness to cooperate with the BBC in jointly bidding for major British sports events turns into a desire to devour his partner at home as well as abroad. Look out for blockbuster deals designed to squeeze the hapless corporation and establish Sky as the predominant sports channel — and remember that the satellite broadcaster could never have come this far without the help of BBC

BIRTSPEAK is the name for the meaningless, euphemistic gobbledegook used by the BBC's director-general, John "mission to explain" Birt, to camouflage what he is actually doing. But the master is rapidly being overtaken by his disciples.

One adept is the corporation's director of personnel, Margaret Salmon. In one of her early efforts, quoted in the recent book *Fuzzy Monsters*, she explained that the BBC was going to sack 1,200 people by "focusing on activities rather than departments and developing a cost-benefit matrix as a tool to help prioritise the areas in which we would work hardest to develop savings ideas".

Now she has hit the jackpot again. In a letter to BBC staff, she writes: "You already know that it is the BBC's aim to replace the corporate-wide conditions of service with conditions of service designed and negotiated within each Directorate. The Directorate conditions will nevertheless incorporate the corporate Core Conditions and comply with the corporate Code of Practice... the BBC has decided that the existing corporate conditions of service should be devolved to Directorates as they currently stand, and become Directorate conditions of service..."

All similar examples of Birtspeak gratefully received.


CORPORATION STREET W.1
An everyday Story of Broadcasting Folk
"WE GAVE IT THE KISS OF LIFE...
Jenny Abramsky CONTROLLER
Radio 5
AND CALLED IT RADIO 5 LIVE...
LIFT
AND IT'S SO SUCCESSFUL...
THAT THE LICENCE PAYER IS GOING TO PAY FOR THE FUNERAL!"
champagne
"Trebles and dead losses all round!"
WAIK
RADIO 5 LIVE ANNUAL BUDGET £30·2 Million
RATINGS
Ken Pyne

I-BSkyB

Look Out! 10 Notable Anniversaries This Year

1 The Blackpool Tower was opened (100 years ago)

2 The Rolls-Royce company started (90)

3 Concorde made its maiden flight (25)

4 Sky TV started broadcasting (5)

5 D-Day landings (50)

(6-10 omitted. Ed.)

CONTRIBUTOR: Peter Telford

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

THE courage and independence of the new BBC was tested to the full when a volley of writs arrived at Television Centre on the afternoon of 28 February.

At 9.30 that evening, following close on the *Eye*'s revelations about the Great Private Pensions Swindle, *Panorama* had prepared a hard-hitting exposé of the companies whose salesmen "churned" pensions.

"Churning" is the process whereby a salesman who has sold someone a pension from one company changes companies and appears on the customer's doorstep to flog another in its place.

Panorama had a brilliant example of this. A woman who had been sold one pension by a salesman from Abbey Life was approached by the same man and offered another — from J. Rothschild Assurance. The story was cast-iron: JRA had actually agreed to compensate the woman for the churning.

The BBC filmed the story and asked JRA for its reaction. Four and a half hours before the programme was due to go out, JRA unleashed writs in the usual ridiculous language which threatened all kinds of horrors if a single word of the churning story appeared. The BBC boldly decided to drop the story, and, in a desperate panic on the cutting room floor, to hack its programme to bits.

PS: The chairman of J. Rothschild Assurance is Sir Mark Weinberg (knighted by Major in 1991). Sir Mark is a former managing director of Abbey Life, and was chairman of Allied Dunbar when he was called in to sit on the "pensions working group" set up by Norman Fowler in 1984. The group recommended the changes in the law which bribed people with a 2 percent rebate off their national insurance payments to leave the state pension scheme, provided they took out a private pension; and allowed others who were in occupational schemes to "opt out" and buy a private pension. Among the many insurance companies, banks etc which profited from the new laws were Abbey Life, Allied Dunbar and J. Rothschild Assurance.

PPS: All this opting out and churning which resulted in large numbers of people getting worse pensions than they already had was monitored by one of the City's top "regulators", the Securities and Investment Board. A prominent member of the SIB from 1986 to 1990 was its deputy chairman, Sir Mark Weinberg.

Mr James Todesco

IN OUR issue of 31 December we reported that the studios of Coin Film City, owned by JD&T, a film production company of which Mr James Todesco is vice president and which was formerly used for the filming of *Eldorado*, were now being used to edit spanish porn films. We acknowledge unreservedly that this is untrue and that neither the company, Mr Todesco nor any company associated with him has at any time been involved in the production or marketing of pornographic films. We sincerely apologise to Mr Todesco for the embarrassment our article has caused.

WHAT, apart from the spinelessness of President Bill Clinton, explains the undue Serbian influence in Washington?

The Voice of America, for example, broadcasts to the Balkans giving full attention to a one-page ad in the *Washington Post* signed by Serbs in America — yet totally ignoring a demonstration of 30,000 outside the White House calling for action to help Bosnia.

Interestingly, the head of VoA's south-east Asian service, Mr Veljko Rasevie, is a Chetnik and Serbian nationalist who has been responsible for some strange appointments. He appointed Zlatica Hoke as head of the new Croatian radio service, even though Ms Hoke is married to Srdan Trifkovic, chief spokesman for the Beast of Bosnia, Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb "prime minister" and psychiatrist whose behaviour suggests that psychopathy may be contagious.

Trifkovic left BBC World Service (having denounced it as communist-run) and went to Washington to work for VoA where he secretly married Hoke. (Colleagues cattily suggest he may have omitted certain formalities in connection with his former marriage in Britain.) He now tours the world, often visiting London, on behalf of Karadzic. When in Washington he stays with Ms Hoke and their child, even though they claim to be separated.

Their breakfast table conversations must be riveting. Ms Hoke has often acted as official interpreter between Clinton and Al Gore and the Croatian president Tudjman and Bosnian president Izetbegovic. Naturally, Ms Hoke is adept at erecting Chinese walls between her personal and private lives and does not pass on details of such conversations to the Serbs — or her husband.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

THE *Manchester Evening News* **carried a fascinating feature on 26 March about how to succeed at marriage.**

The reporter, Flic Everett, profiled four happy couples, including *Archers* scriptwriter Janey Preger and her husband Peter, a "top BBC executive". Janey was pictured gazing lovingly at a picture of hubby, to whom, it was revealed, she has been married for 25 years.

What profound research went into this article? Er, not much, it seems. Mr Preger's marital name is Everett — with touching naiveté, young Flic had profiled her own parents!

IN *ARIEL*, **the BBC's house magazine, script editor Nell Denton describes how "overwhelmingly lucky" she feels.**

After less than a year in her job she "was being asked to work with not one, but two of my favourite comic novelists — Charles Dickens and David Lodge".

To what should she attribute this remarkable good fortune? Surely not that her father, Charles Denton, is the Beeb's head of drama?

RadioTimes

ALL LISTENERS are equal but some are more equal than others. As part of the great campaign to get its charter renewed in 1996, the Birtists have decided that radio must stop "super-serving the ABC1s".

This brilliant piece of Birtspeak means not only that controllers and producers are being told to attract more C2s, Ds, Es and complete basket-cases, but they must also affront and alienate their traditional listeners. No longer super-serving ABC1s simply means being thicker and proud of it.

So far there have been two great advances into stupidity. On Radio 4, the main afternoon slot is now occupied every weekday by the prodigiously dreadful *Anderson Country*, presented by a previously unknown lamebrain from Londonderry called Gerry Anderson.

It is unbelievably dreadful: phone-ins, studio discussions and taped feature items of spectacular silliness are all presided over by a Terry Wogan wannabe who is unable to understand almost anything that is said to him, however slowly, or to say anything coherent himself. Many of the guests become first puzzled and then indignant. In Anderson's first week, a woman caller managed to tell him, quite justly, that he was a dickhead.

Attempting to convey the inappropriateness of this programme for Radio 4, critics have called it fit for Radio 2, tabloid radio, local radio writ large. (The plan certainly was to recover some of the many listeners who have turned to local radio stations, the tiny weeny flaw in this scheme being that absolutely nobody wants to listen to other people's local radio as nearly all of it must be on a national station.) However, on reflection, what *Anderson Country* most nearly resembles is hospital radio — and that's not a regular hospital either.

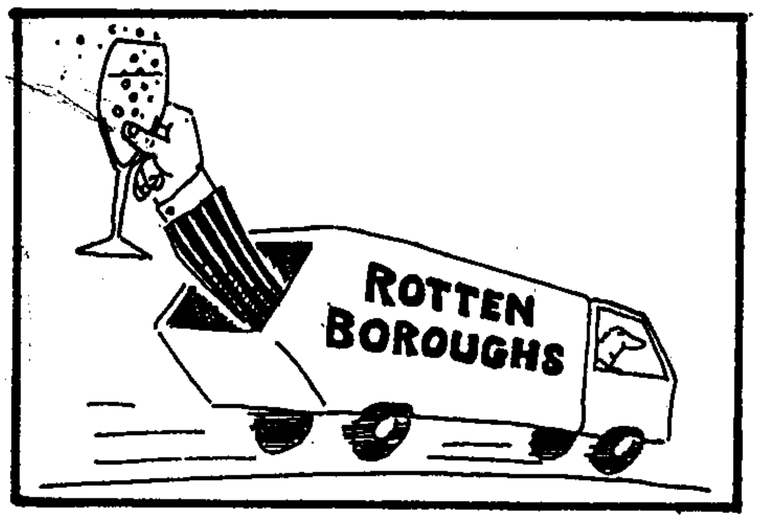
Chris Dunkley's excellent *Feedback* programme has reported that a "cascade of ordure" has been falling on Anderson's head from outraged Radio 4 listeners. Happily for him, the flow is now being diverted on to the latest Birtist folly: Radio 5 Live.

During the Gulf war, the "rolling news" service on Radio 4, known as "Scud FM", proved a surprise success. Obviously this was because there was a war on and people wanted to know what was happening. Birt, however, somehow took it to mean that people wanted a rolling news service all the time. His initial attempt to commandeer Radio 4's long wave band for this absurdity was thwarted by adroit ABC1 agitation. So Radio 5 bit the dust instead.

Unlike *Anderson Country*, "Five Live" (909 and 693 MW) is presented and produced by normally competent BBC staff. Its new controller, Jenny Abramsky, is no fool and will probably survive the poisoned chalice. However, Radio Bloke makes excruciating listening. So far, there has simply not been nearly enough news to fill 24 hours of continuous broadcasting, even leavened with sport, more phone-ins and fatuous features.

Interviews are endlessly protracted; and everything is anticipated, analysed and repeated until the listener feels sick. The presenters and reporters are so desperate you can hear the eagerness and relief in their voices when news of a juicy car crash or bloody murder comes in. "Any news yet of the extent of the injuries?" they keep asking hopefully. Their disappointment when the Gloucestershire police failed to dig up any more corpses for Five Live's first week was almost tearful.

The theory, perhaps, is that potential listeners are presumed to have the mental faculties of a goldfish, so that by the time they've swum round the bowl once, they've clean forgotten they've ever done it before. You can't call *that* super-serving the ABC1s, can you John?



LAMBETH

HAVING banned *The Silence of the Lambs* **from its library shelves to protect Lambeth's innocent and impressionable, council education guardians have had no such scruples over Luis Nunez's** *Santeria: A Practical Guide to Afro-Caribbean Magic*.

This sombre tome (Santeria is an established religion in the Caribbean) advises readers that should they wish to ward off Inspector Knacker they can go to their local pet shop and find "two vultures which should be sacrificed, their hearts soaked in rooster and guinea hen blood and then mixed with household dust collected at noon and midnight".

TOWER HAMLETS

STRANGE political alliances continue to be forged in Tower Hamlets, where the British National party aims to increase its racist representation on the council at May's elections.

Take, for instance, Shadwell Labour councillor Albert Lilley, a socialist of the Alf Garnett school. Lilley was recently nominated as a freeman of the City of London by one Denis Delderfield, a founder of the racist New Britain party (NBP), which will be rivalling the British National party for the local loony right wing vote.

So far the NBP has concentrated on distributing instructive pamphlets to the slum dwellers of Cllr Lilley's native Wapping ward. Unlike most of the local junk literature, these pamphlets do not include helpful Urdu or Bengali translations.

But then much of the election literature in the East End is likely to err on the side of secrecy. Will Liberal Cllr Trish Webb's leaflets, for instance, tell Bow voters about her recent conviction for handling stolen goods... a quantity of knickers, no less?.

And will Liberal council candidate Abdul Ali Rouf explain to voters in St Mary's ward, Stepney, why the local Bangladeshi press claims Inspector Knacker of the Dacca police wants to question him on a murder charge? Watch this space.

BRADFORD

THE "mystery" buyer of Priestman Home, a former council old folks' home in Frizinghall, is none other than Labour councillor Ashiq Hussain.

To the chagrin of Bradford's Labour group, news has leaked that Hussain bought the property for just £130,000 — something of a snip for a *22-bedroom* mansion.

Fully enough, the council shut the home three years ago claiming it couldn't afford to comply with new government safety standards. At the time it pledged that Priestman would become a hostel for 20 homeless families, which would save the authority £100,000 a year in bed and breakfast costs.

But the plans fell through and the house went on the market last autumn. No buyer could be found until Cllr Hussain's fortuitous offer put a few bob into Bradford's depressed coffers. To show what a good socialist he is, perhaps he will put up homeless families in some of his 22 bedrooms.

SEXY STORY

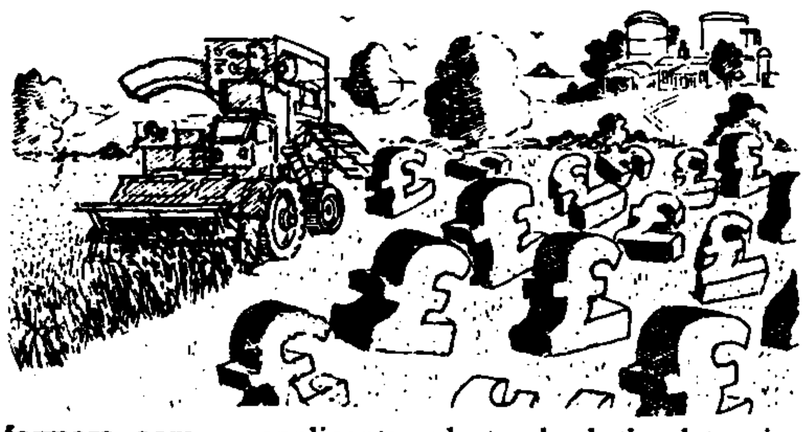
THERE WAS intense press interest in the recent sexual harassment claim brought by Kim Cook, former head housekeeper at the Haycock Hotel in Peterborough, against Poste Hotels Ltd, the Haycock's owners.

She claimed that she had been forced to quit after the hotel manager persistently asked her "What colour knickers are you wearing?" and "Can I feel your tits?" On the day the industrial tribunal hearing was due to begin last month, the press bench included hacks from several national tabloids — and, of course, the local *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*. After four hours of negotiations, the case was settled, with Poste Hotels agreeing to pay the unfortunate woman £2,000.

The story was widely covered. The *Daily Mirror*, for instance, ran a full-page piece ("Dirty boss made life hell for girl he lusted after"). But not a word appeared in the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*. Why not? "It was a legal thing," the paper's deputy editor told the *Eye*. "We were advised not to run it by our solicitors."

By an amazing coincidence, the solicitors in question — Messrs Greenwoods — also acted for Poste Hotels in the case. By an even more amazing coincidence, two days before the hearing Poste Hotels bought a two-page advertisement (costing about £2,000) in... the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*.

DOWN ON THE FARM



MORE THAN 500 farmers committed suicide between 1979 and 1990 – twice the national average. So the farming community must be reassured by the agriculture minister's claim that her officials "always try to deal helpfully and courteously with our farming clients".

The Maffia members, she said, were particularly active "at stressful times such as when IACS forms are being completed". Just as well. For much stress has been caused by the threat of dire penalties for those farmers who got their complex IACS subsidy application forms wrong.

The stress increased recently when the Maffia made its own cock-up. Having received information from farmers last year on land areas and usage, the Maffia "helpfully" returned the information on a reprinted form, requiring applicants only to check the data, sign the forms and return them.

All fine and dandy — until farmers found a number of puzzling errors on their forms, some fearing that they themselves had made terrible mistakes in the previous year's forms for which they would be locked away or worse.

All became clear on 24 March when Gillian Shephard's "helpful" officials told the farmers that "because of a system fault, associated with the extraction of data from our computer", some of the forms were incorrect. Detailed instructions, even more complex than the original guidance, were then given for correcting the errors.

Farmers, who may be feeling more suicidal than ever, will be pleased to learn that the Maffia has set up a "helpline" offering free general advice on their businesses. No one is prepared to guess how many farmers will kill themselves after trying to carry out the advice they are given by the ever-helpful ministry.

ONE SUCH farmer could be Leon Downey, who owns a pedigree dairy herd in Llanglofflan, west Wales. Having sold his own milk from his farm cafe for more than a decade — with no complaints — he has been told that the regular health testing by the ministry's "advisory" service is to be charged at £60 per sample.

At four times a year, £240 comes to more than the total income from the sales of his milk, thus ending this part of his business. An appeal to the food marketing quango, Taste of Wales, set up to promote Welsh food, was to no avail. It has refused to intervene in what it considers a "political" issue. Being a "good European" Downey now plans to sell French long-life milk.

At least Downey, this year, has not had to fill in any IACS forms, as he failed to fill them in last year. This might have had something to do with the fact that his forms were printed in Welsh. As a former member of the Hallé orchestra, English-speaking Downey has returned forms with the comment "me no speak Welsh — please send in English". He was unable to decipher the reply. It was in Welsh.

Meanwhile, more than half Wales's dairy farmers are throwing away milk as they have produced more than their EC quotas. If they sell the milk they will have to pay 28p per litre "super levy", as against the 22p they are normally paid. In effect, they would have to *pay* 6p for every litre over and above the cost of producing it — even though cheese factories in the princedom are having to lay off staff because they do not have *enough* milk to turn into cheese. Forward with Europe!

IN A foretaste of things to come for Downey and other dairy farmers, a small dairy in the US, appalled at the recent licensing of the growth hormone BST (*Eye* 841), has taken to labelling its milk "free from added BST".

Monsanto, the multinational which hopes to market the genetically engineered drug here, issued a writ saying the dairy had "libelled other milk". The dairy — initially reluctant to tackle the giant head-on — tried to settle out of court, but then found its sales had increased 20 percent in three weeks. It is now fighting the case.

Washington "mothers against drugged milk" have joined the campaign and paid for a billboard calling for the product to be banned. They have also published notices in the *New York Times* advertising a free telephone "helpline" for consumers wishing to find BST-free milk.

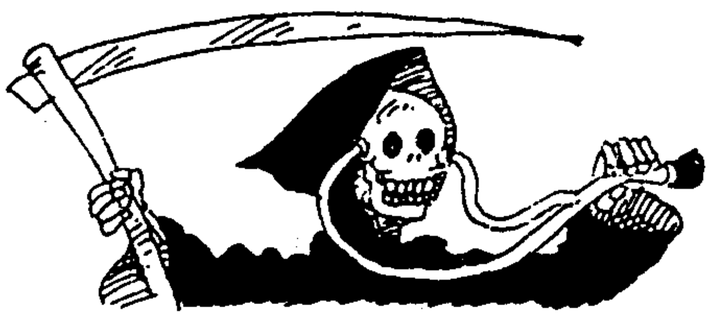
Nicholas Soames, meanwhile, our very own minister for corpulence, remains in favour of this drug. Why?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

LOOK YOU DAFT COW! I STOPPED 'EM FOX HUNTING HERE MONTHS AGO! THIS IS A DRAG HUNT!
BUT...
STOP THE CRUEL
THEY DRAG A LURE AROUND!! NOBODY'S GOING TO TOUCH YOUR PRECIOUS FOX!
SO WHAT'S THE BLOODY PROBLEM NOW!!
I KNOW BUT....
STOP THE
HE'S GOT MY BUSS PASS!
EEAAGGH
BAN HUNT
STOP THE CRU



DOING THE ROUNDS

DR SEAN YOUNG, chairman of the anaesthetic division of East Yorkshire NHS trust, has been found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the general medical council (GMC). He failed to relinquish an incompetent colleague of his duties despite a number of warnings from senior operating department assistants.

Dr Behrooz Irani was struck off last year after he turned off alarms on anaesthetic equipment at **Humberside's Castle Hill hospital** and left a patient, who turned blue and had no heart beat for seven minutes, in a permanent vegetative state.

Dr Irani previously worked at **Hull Royal Infirmary**, where consultant surgeon Mr Alan Wilkinson had to administer artificial respiration to bring one of his patients round after the anaesthetic. Mr Wilkinson told the GMC hearing: "The man was not safe." But he added: "In Hull we do not have consultant anaesthetists growing on trees. I didn't make a formal complaint because it was either him or nobody. We are constantly having to do that because we are so understaffed."

After leaving **Yorkshire**, Dr Irani worked as a locum in **Chepstow, Gwent**, until he was sacked after leaving a patient — whose oxygen level was dangerously low — to make a telephone call.

● FURTHER evidence that the NHS reforms are working well comes from **Leicestershire**, where half the places on GP training schemes are unfilled due to a lack of applicants.

In **West Sussex**, a survey of 223 GPs has revealed that 78 percent regret joining the profession; 50 percent have seriously considered quitting; 90 percent said their increased workload was having an adverse effect on the quality of their care; and 86 percent want to opt out of round-the-clock responsibility for patients.

Last year, the department of health promised to look into the misuse of out-of-hours care "as a matter or urgency". After five months of extensive consultation, the NHS management executive has announced its decision: "We are still considering the proposals." As GP negotiator Dr Hamish Meldrum said: "I'm hopping mad".

● AT THE **United Leeds teaching hospitals NHS trust**, chief executive S.E. Ingham has written to consultant ophthalmic surgeon Bruce Noble asking him to "ensure that the number of patients treated in the last few weeks of the financial year are restricted so as to ensure the ophthalmology contract is not exceeded. I appreciate that this means that very few elective patients will be treated between January and the end of March."

Meanwhile, the chief executives of **Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal NHS trust** and **North Derbyshire district health authority** have angered local GPs by asking them to reconsider whether their emergency admissions are "truly acute" and suggesting some of them might do just as well in a nursing home or with increased domiciliary support. The letter was sent after the trust had to close its casualty department on three occasions during the new year flu epidemic and divert emergencies 25 miles to **Doncaster**.

● MR K.B. MILLS, consultant ophthalmic surgeon at the **Central Manchester healthcare trust**, has written an illuminating letter to GP Dr Simenoff explaining the delay in treating a patient: "You are quite correct in your assumption that their is a two-tier health service and of course GPs who are fundholders are fast-tracked in all hospitals, the **Royal Eye hospital and the Central Manchester trust** being no exception. I like yourself feel that this deception on behalf of the ministry would in fact be highlighted particularly as we draw toward another election."

● IN NOVEMBER 1992, the Princess of Wales opened the **Amanda Bevan rehabilitation centre in Coventry** to provide much needed community support and treatment for patients with severe head injuries and their families. In October 1993, the medical consultant retired and the centre entered into negotiations with the **Walsgrave hospital NHS trust** to find a replacement. Last month, talks in stalemate, it closed.

● AT **Gloucester Royal hospital**, the standard of care on an acute elderly ward has come under fire from the community health council. The furniture in the day room is "totally unacceptable for elderly patients"; the emergency call system is sometimes "out of easy reach"; and the supply of sheets and night-gowns is "frequently non-existent". The meal presentation is "uninviting, cumbersome and totally deterring" and the cutlery is "not always sufficient to enable a handicapped or confused patient to eat". As hospital spokesman Irwin Watson put it: "We're 95 percent up to standard."

EMBARRASSING STATISTICS

★ **St Helens and Knowsley community health trust** is to cut £80,000 from its budget for school nurses, which could mean the axe for 16 out of the 34 staff. London's cash strapped **Kingston hospital** has also had to cut 30 jobs but as June Haswell, chief officer of **Kingston and Esher community health council,** said: "These posts are administrative so the impact should not be too great." At **London's Royal Masonic hospital**, 60 staff are still owed money after being sacked without notice last month. And **Barking and Havering DHA** is planning to close one of the casualty departments at **Oldchurch and Harrow Wood hospitals**, which could put 20 minutes on to an ambulance ride. In **Huddersfield**, plans are afoot to close **Mill Hill and St Lukes hospitals**, which provide acute and long term geriatric and psychiatric beds.

M.D.

WAITROSE

GOOSEBERRY FRUIT FOOL

best before (2)

01 APR

43p

ORCADIAN NEWS

IT IS three years, almost to the day, since the Orkney children snatched from their beds in February 1991 were returned to their homes.

The *Eye* warned then that other lives would be devastated so long as social workers remained hell-bent on proving that satanic ritual abuse exists somewhere in the country — presumably in the belief that such proof would justify the terrible mistakes made so far.

But the mistakes continue. Shortly after the Orkney fiasco social workers were granted place of safety orders which allowed them to remove children from three closely related Ayrshire families. The evidence on which these actions were based consisted of a complaint from a neighbour, a lady who has since stated publicly — and often — that she cannot believe what happened as a result of her complaint.

For almost three years the families have protested their innocence. Unlike the Orkney families, the Ayrshire families have not had the good fortune to be heard by a sheriff who insisted on seeing some evidence. Nevertheless the families continued to protest and an inquiry began at the end of last year and is scheduled to end this month. It is taking place in offices at Ayr racecourse, possibly in the hope of recouping some of the massive legal fees on the track.

Social workers and the legislature have, however, learned form the events in Orkney and the inquiry is being held *in camera*, ensuring that social workers actions will not receive too much publicity. It has been claimed that the shroud of secrecy is to protect the children — but this is nonsense. The identity of the Orkney families is known to everyone in the area but the media made no attempt to publish names.

Should these increasingly desperate attempts to prove the existence of satanic ritual abuse come to nothing, something very unpleasant is brewing in Bishop Auckland, Durham. Let's hope they at least get that one right.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE Philharmonia Orchestra, favoured by Sir Leonard Hoffman, the Salzburg Festival, the Chatelet theatre in Paris and a galaxy of international conductors — everyone in fact, except Nicholas "Abominable" Snowman — is in difficulties.

It has been forced to cut fees to its extra players by 10 percent and to make a number of office staff redundant. The Arts Council, meanwhile, seems unconcerned judging by its recent actions — ploughing ever greater sums into Snowman's South Bank Centre (SBC).

In the current financial year the LPO and the Philharmonia have at best received standstill grants (ie cuts), while the SBC has seen year on year increases in its budget. This year it has been given a further £400,000 to raise its public grant to £14 million.

The orchestras receive just £0.7m each, around half of which they pay straight back to the SBC in rental and commission for the privilege of promoting their concerts at the Royal Festival Hall.

A blueprint exists for running the SBC on half the public grant it now receives. The savings would come largely from reductions in office staff, but the money saved, redistributed among the ailing orchestras, would make a vast difference. And the Arts Council would for once be seen to be doing what the musical profession wants.

HUSBAND
Hi darling. I'll be late, dama trains broken down
Yoohoo bigboy, come back to bed. Ive other guys to see
Darling!.. Darling!

Letters

Under canvassed

Sir,

What is Westminster council or its Conservative group up to now? Last evening I received a visitor claiming she was "doing a survey for the council". She asked me did I have any complaints about anything the council was doing and what way was I intending to vote in the forthcoming elections? When I asked her if she was a canvasser she did not answer. When I asked her if she was a paid worker for the council she said "no". When I said I intended to vote Labour she asked me no further "survey" questions. Is this council completely incapable of running an honest election campaign?

Yours sincerely,
C.M. PHILLIPS,
London SW1.

Mirror image

Sir,

Given that the proceedings that Jane Preston has brought are currently pending before the appropriate tribunal, it is inappropriate to respond in detail to your article. Further, Bridget Rowe will not dignify your article responding to your unfortunate and gratuitous insults.

However, we would like to go some way to correcting the distorted impression given by your article.

As your article states, Jane Preston was a freelance contributor and submitted invoices for her work. Any arrangement she had with the previous editor, Mr Hagerty, did not change her freelance status.

After the launch of the magazine, we saw no sensible reason why Jane Preston needed to attend our offices. Regrettably, your article fails to inform the reader that she was assured that we would continue to offer her commissions and did so on a frequent basis until features ceased to be part of TV First in November 1993.

Your suggestion that we ceased to offer Jane Preston commissions because she was pregnant is wholly incorrect as is the statement that she would be "forcibly escorted" from our offices.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN CRUDDACE,
Solicitor, Mirror Group Newspapers.

Lookalike

Beckett

Smith

Sir,

Have any of your other readers noticed the remarkable similarity between wee John Smith, canny scot and leader of the Labour party, and toothsome nun Sister Wendy Beckett?

I think the deputy leader should be told!

Yours etc,
EMIL FORTUNE,
Harlow, Essex.

Sporran spurned

Sir,

Re your James Kelman cartoon: One last time for the cheap seats, Glaswegians refer colloquially to their native city as "Glesga" or "Glesca". The only people you will ever hear calling it "Glasgee" will be English.

Also, I would be very surprised if Mr Kelman ever wore a kilt in his life. One can only assume that — to remain consistent — the next time your cartoonist draws Martin Amis or Julian Barnes, he will depict them skipping round a maypole in Morris dancers' outfits.

Yours in the huff,
CHRIS BROOKMYRE,
Edinburgh.

Point of information

Sir,

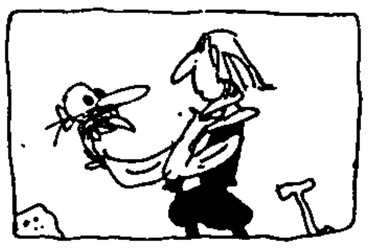
Your comments about Network SouthEast in EYE *842 colour section are, to use a railway technical term, complete bollocks.*

Network SouthCentral has always paid for the customer service information point at Victoria. Railway restructuring ready for privatisation means that our activities will in future be confined to platforms 9-19 at the station. Instead of putting our customer services people in an office and behind a screen, we have put them on the station concourse where they can be proactive in offering help, rather than waiting to be asked. Disabled travel arrangements are dealt with at the station manager's office.

We are not losing custom on Network SouthEast, we are gaining it.

May your organ prosper.

Yours sincerely,
GRAHAM ECCLES,
Director, South Central Division, Network SouthEast.



LUVVIES

If I had been born without great beauty I would have been an interior designer.

JOAN COLLINS
Brighton Evening Argus

Submitted by Allen Reynolds.

An occasional column devoted to the acting profession. £10 paid for entries printed.

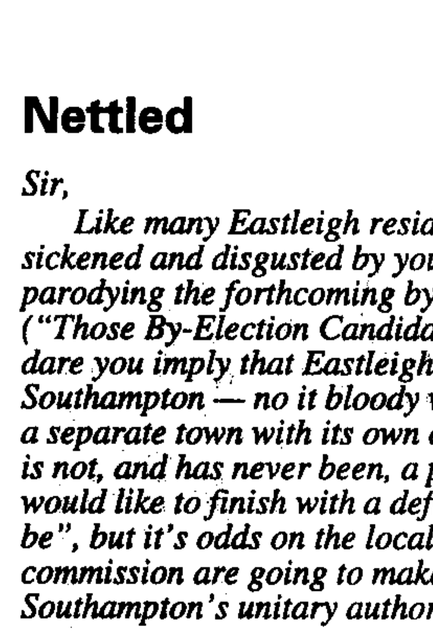
Nettled

Sir,

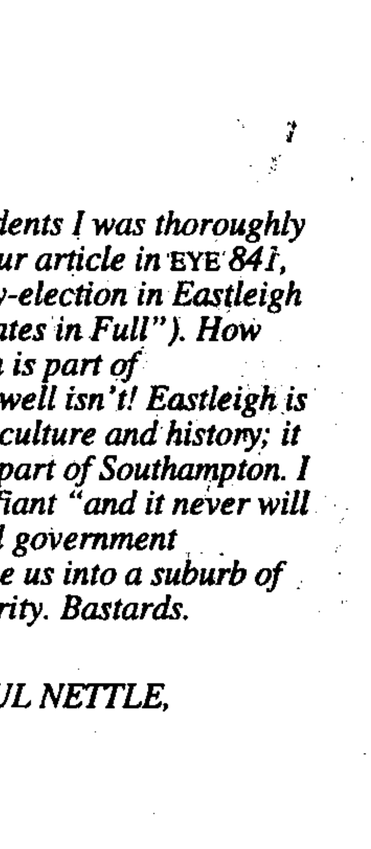
Like many Eastleigh residents I was thoroughly sickened and disgusted by your article in EYE *841, parodying the forthcoming by-election in Eastleigh ("Those By-Election Candidates in Full"). How dare you imply that Eastleigh is part of Southampton — no it bloody well isn't! Eastleigh is a separate town with its own culture and history; it is not, and has never been, a part of Southampton. I would like to finish with a defiant "and it never will be", but it's odds on the local government commission are going to make us into a suburb of Southampton's unitary authority. Bastards.*

Yours,
CLLR PAUL NETTLE,
Eastleigh, Hants

Lookalike



Buck



Blonde

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the amazing family resemblance between Senorita Bienvenida Buck of 1994 fame, and the "not so dumb" blonde of 1944 who surrounded herself with senior military men of low intelligence and lustful mien?

Does history repeat itself?

Yours cynically,
I.P. HARDING,
Ware, Herts.

Friendly society

Sir,

We act for West Bromwich Building Society whose attention has been drawn to an article, headed "Bankers", in your edition of 25 March.

The article is riddled with inaccuracies including the fundamental misconception that "lump sums" were invested with the society. That is wrong.

Our clients' equity release mortgage product enabled elderly people to borrow money to use for whatever purpose they thought fit. Insofar as there were any schemes to invest cash in high-yielding bonds (as you claim) they were devised by independent financial advisers. As you made clear it is FIMBRA which is the regulatory body of IFAs and it is only in the context of a certain firm of IFAs which has been declared in default that FIMBRA has conducted its investigation. You will immediately appreciate that, far from the society's chief executive showing contempt for its regulator, FIMBRA has no regulatory responsibility for the society.

One other issue should be clearly established. The society has not threatened "to make dozens homeless". The very reverse. It has publicly stated that it will not take proceedings for possession of any home the subject of an equity mortgage unless there has been a flagrant breach of the mortgage conditions.

Yours faithfully,
EVERSHED, WELLS & HIND,
SOLICITORS.
Birmingham.

I-SPY *San Antonio, Texas*

Submitted by William M. Keels. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Incommunicado

Sir,

For the record, I have not, as you report, been appointed the TUC's communications "supremo". I remain, alas, a mere humble consultant.

Yours,
DES WILSON,
Burson-Marsteller, London.

You bet

Sir,

May I just point out to Sharon Walter (Letters, 842) that there is indeed a Ladbroke's in Peckham, SE15. It is, in fact, on Peckham High Street itself. You may have lived in New Cross Miss Walter, but you obviously didn't venture out of it very often.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON KELLY,
Peckham, SE15.

Shop soiled

Sir,

I read with mounting disbelief the letter in the DAILY TELEGRAPH *from Martin Robeson of Sainsbury's claiming that their policy of "out of town" superstores has no impact on town centre trading. Are we living in the same world?*

The ultimate insult from this very powerful organisation was in the way that Mr Robeson described himself. Since when was Sainsbury's elected as a "Director of Town Planning"? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN LEWIS,
Eastleigh, Hants.

PS: Bearing in mind that Sainsbury's is a contributor to Tory funds, I doubt that this letter will be published in the Torygraph.

Ring of truth

Sir,

With all due respect to "Despairing" (25 March), what does she want her husband to do: take off his wedding ring every time he leaves the house? His peccadilloes may indeed be heart-rending but does she want him to add hypocrisy to them? A facade of respectability is all very well, but isn't honesty better and supposed to be a virtue?

Yours,
GILBERT JONES,
Lausanne, Switzerland

Y not?

Sir,

The ex-chief of the defence staff would still have a job if he had followed Action Man's example (EYE *842), as his underpants have been permanently welded to his body for decades.*

Yours,
STEPHEN SINCLAIR,
Glasgow.

Gardeners questioned

Sir,

In a week when 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, has been daily yielding up the results of the activities of a nutcase with a spade, how tasteless that your cover of 11 March should feature a nutcase with a spade.

You and I are through.

Yours faithfully
A. SICKO,
Headington, Oxford.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"It's a two-man contest between Torvill and Dean and Gritschek and Platov."
Radio 4
(A.L. Allen)

"So, can you point to anywhere on the map that's undiscovered?"
NICKY CAMPBELL, Radio One
(Chris Long)

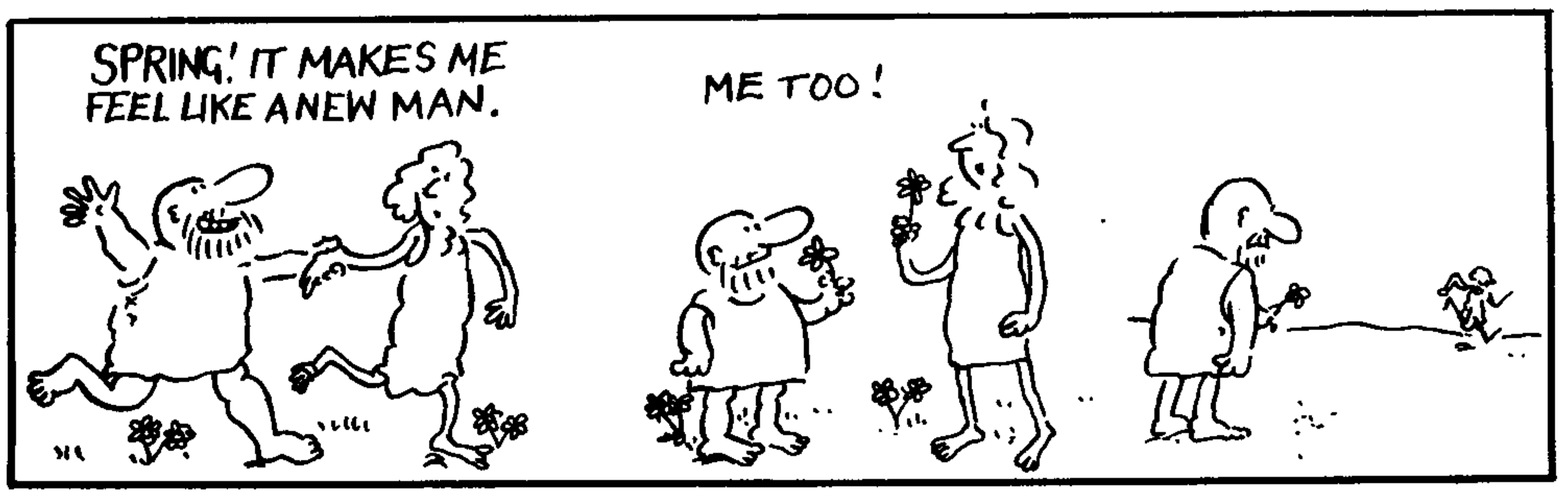
Paula Yates: *Your new single, "Let's Get Married"; what's it about?*
The Proclaimers: *Erm, getting married...*
The Big Breakfast, Channel 4
(Chris Sanderson)

"Whether that was a penalty or not, the referee thought otherwise."
BRIAN MOORE
(Eddie Heathcote)

"Pallister's an excellent centre half, particularly upstairs."
RON ATKINSON, ITV
(R. Burton)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from Italy

from Our Own Correspondent

REMEMBER two years ago when Italy was supposed to be turning over a new leaf? All those worthy documentaries about how our corrupt politics had been reformed? The close-ups of Judge di Pietro carting off 30 percent of the political class for interrogation to the sound of a tarantella?

Well, if we were going to turn over a new leaf we have decided to think again. All that press drivel about an anti-corruption purge was, like everything here, partly a fashion and partly a public relations confidence trick played on the gullible foreign correspondents.

Two years on, of course, no sentence has yet been passed and no one has gone to prison. Most of the real scumbags have not even gone to trial — not even the ministry of health, which put up the price of AIDS medicines by 50 percent in return for kickbacks.

And the reason? We Italians don't really give a dried fig about justice. We prefer show trials to real ones. And while we don't want a real judge, we do want to be able to pose during the evening *passeggiata* in a di Pietro t-shirt.

Above all, we wanted an election: someone to vote for, jobs for the boys, a bandwagon to jump on to. In short, we needed a miracle man to tell us that we can go on being as corrupt as before.

And who did we get? Step forward media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, saviour of the old Italy (*Shurely "prophet of the new..."? Ed*) and leader of the ridiculous "Come on, Italy" party, now three months old.

Berlusconi once plied his trade as a Des O'Connor-style singer on ocean liners. Like Cap'n Bob, Silvio used his socialist political connections and mysterious bank loans to build up a "miracle" media empire of Murdochian pretensions and Maxwellian-sized debts. As befits a member of the "new" Italy, he was a member of the P2 masonic lodge, which was found to have been involved in attempted coups, bombings and corruption at all levels of Italian society.

The "new" Silvio now says that at the time he thought P2 was a gentlemen's club. When he was PM, Bettino Craxi (best man at Silvio's wedding and indicted on corruption charges) made sure that a law was passed enabling Silvio to own all the private television stations and have a massive share in most of the newspapers. The "new" Silvio now professes to disown Craxi.

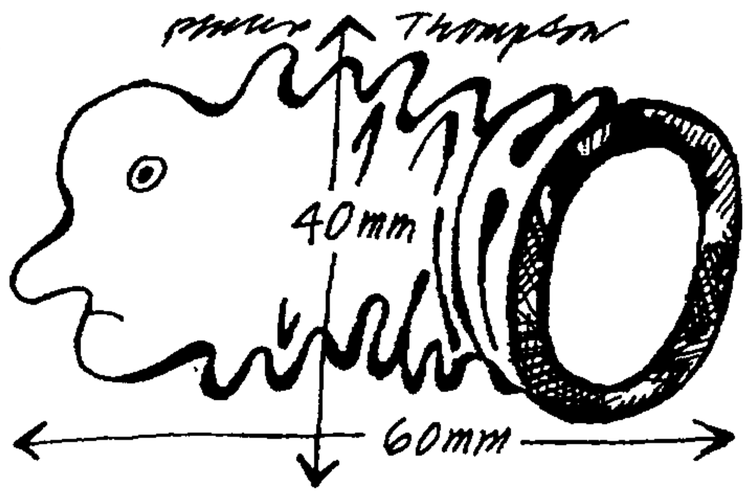
In the meantime we Italians are being bombarded with Orwellian propaganda for "Come On, Italy" on the four Berlusconi-owned TV channels. Between tits, bums and football matches, he warns us gravely against consorting with the Communists. Vote for Silvio and you will be able to tackle like Franco Baresi. Vote for Silvio and pubescent girls will dance in your living room for free. And while all this goes on, anti-Silvio satire is banned from state TV "because it might influence the vote".

Berlusconi himself refuses face-to-face interviews and will only answer questions if they are given to him in written form. This is because, like Maxwell, he is liable to explode when contradicted and prefers to memorise presidential-style speeches in front of his moronic supporters. Incapable of spontaneous speech, he is unlikely to want to make many appearances in parliament because there are no autocue facilities.

It was no surprise that the fascists and the Mafia both declared their support for Berlusconi and Come On, Italy.

As the horsetrading now begins and he tries to form a "strong and authoritative" government — with him at the head of it — he will presumably not forget his original aims: to protect his failing businesses, pay off his debts and make sure that we Italians spend another 20 years licking his jackboots while watching housewives strip off on his TV channels.

FUNNY OLD WORLD



Compiled by
Victor Lewis-Smith

● "What is all the fuss about?" Wekesa Sambu asked a hastily convened news conference at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. "A technical hitch like this could have happened anywhere in the world. You people are not patriots. You just want to cause trouble."

Sambu, a spokesman for Kenya Airways, was speaking after the cancellation of a through flight from Kisumu, via Jomo Kenyatta, to Berlin: "The forty-two passengers had boarded the plane ready for takeoff, when the pilot noticed one of the tyres was flat. Kenya Airways did not possess a spare tyre, and unfortunately the airport nitrogen canister was empty. A passenger suggested taking the tyre to a petrol station for inflation, but unluckily the jack had gone missing so we couldn't get the wheel off. Our engineers tried heroically to reinflate the tyre with a bicycle pump, but had no luck, and the pilot even blew into the valve with his mouth, but he passed out.

"When I announced that the flight had to be abandoned, one of the passengers, Mr Mutu, suddenly struck me about the face with a life-jacket whistle and said we were a national disgrace. I told him he was being ridiculous, and that there was to be another flight in a fortnight. And, in the meantime, he would be able to enjoy the splendid scenery around Kisumu, albeit at his own expense." *(The Standard [Kenya], 6/1/93. Spotter — Dr M. Nicholson)*

— ● —

● "Firm but fair is my motto," Officer Boniface Onyeabor told a Coroner's Court in Anambra state. "The man was a thief, and he deserved all he got."

Onyeabor, of the Anambra State Police, was giving evidence at an inquest into the death of Tfawa Ojukwu in Enugu. "Ojukwu was a notorious genitals thief. He would go up to people, shake hands with them, and moments later they would discover that their testicles had been stolen. Luckily, that night, one of his victims raised the alarm and a crowd chased after Ojukwu, cornering him in National Square, shouting 'genitals thief' at him, beating him up, and setting him alight with a tyre necklace.

"By the time I arrived in the square, Ojukwu was already ablaze. It was far too late to save him, so I waited until the flames died down, and then ordered a passing driver to take the remains to the mortuary. The driver refused, calling me 'naughty policeman' and implying that I had buggered my mother. So I shot him. Then I ordered another driver to take both bodies away. There was no more trouble. As I said, firm but fair. That is my motto.

"When it was all over, the victim thanked me, and told me that he had got his testicles back again. Kind words like that makes my job seem worthwhile." *(Khaleej Times, 8/2/94. Spotter — Margaret Farrall)*

— ● —

● *"Is the Commission aware of objections to the EN 600 standard for condoms?" asked Dutch bureaucrat Nel van Dijk, in a written question to the EC. "EC guidelines give the average length of the sexual organ of the European male as 17cm, with an average diameter of 5.6cm. However, many Member States find this ruling unsatisfactory and, following research published in the British Medical Journal and Der Spiegel, German governments are officially challenging the figures, claiming they are inadequate in the case of their populations.*

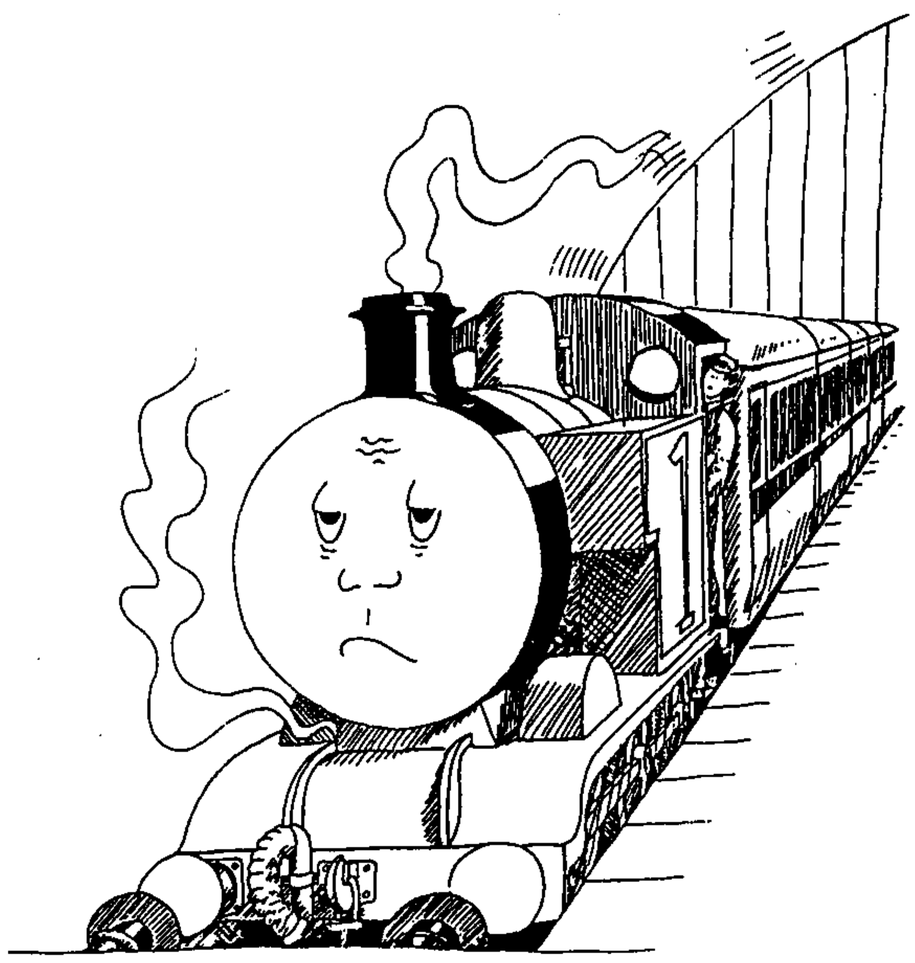
"Would the Commission not agree that, in view of the sensitivities aroused with regard to determining the average length of the sexual organ of the European male, a 'European Charter on Condoms' should be drawn up, allowing the principle of subsidiarity to be applied with respect to statistical averages for the male member?"

In his written reply on behalf of the Commission, Herr Bangemann stated: "The European standards body CEN is currently in the process of establishing European safety standards for condoms, as required by Directive 93/42/EEC on medical devices. Their report, expected towards the end of 1994, will not be of a compulsory nature, and there will therefore be no need to provide derogations, as suggested by the Honourable Member." (EC DOC-EN\QE237237838. Spotter — Liam Hargadon)

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

All change



"SORRY, Gordon. I haven't got time to hang around in stations," said Thomas one afternoon. "This Shuttlelink initiative is a job and a half."

"Pah!" snorted Gordon, who was waiting to pull the teatime express. "It's only a 20-minute journey to the airport. Besides, that Shuttlelink nonsense is just a hollow ploy to dissociate the airport service from the rest of the rail network."

"Whatever it is, it's working," replied Thomas as he puffed away happily.

He was right. That evening the Fat Controller said: "Well done Thomas. You've helped make my Shuttlelink a success. In fact it's so successful we can afford to make a massive improvement to the quality of service we deliver."

Thomas couldn't sleep all night because he was so excited at the prospect of capital expenditure. He wondered what massive investment the Fat Controller had in mind — why, he might even provide new signs for the station platforms or give the staff new name badges.

He discovered the answer when he rolled into the station the next morning, to find Gordon in the Shuttlelink platform.

"That's right, Thomas," beamed the Fat Controller. "We can afford to hire Gordon and his carriages, to give the customer-base the ride comfort it expects from our product."

"But it's only a 20-minute journey," protested Thomas. "Gordon is designed for the four-hour express run."

A look of panic spread over the Fat Controller's face. "Besides, who is going to take care of..."

"Yes, yes, Thomas. Stop blathering and give me time to think," snapped the Fat Controller.

"OH, please let me rest," moaned Thomas. "You know I wasn't designed for this sort of thing."

"Sorry, but this is the non-stop express," replied Thomas's driver sympathetically. "And we're already an hour late because you're only doing seventy."

"We're going too fast, we're going too fast," clattered Annie and Clarabel. "We haven't a buffet car, we haven't a public address system, we haven't air conditioning..."

Gordon was just about to leave with the Shuttlelink when Thomas arrived at the big station. "Chop, chop, little Thomas. Can't wait around in stations, can we?"

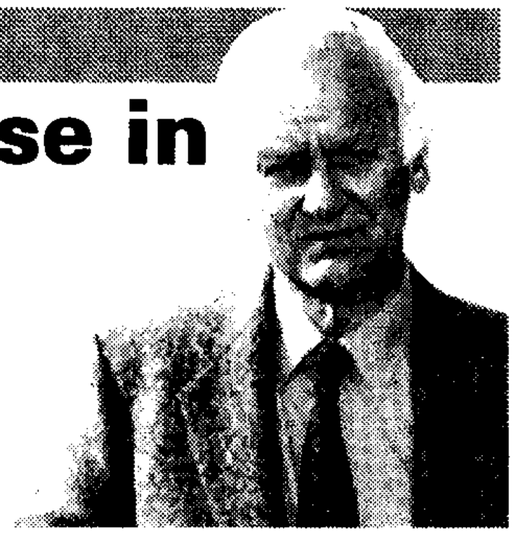
Thomas didn't reply. He had collapsed from exhaustion at the buffer stops.

He was barely conscious when the fitters dragged him to the engine shed and proceeded to stuff him with anabolic steroids and generally prepare him for the teatime express.

Thomas The Privatised Tank Engine, Midlands Publishing, Price £4.99. Published April 21st.

TONIGHT'S TV

Inspector Morse in 'La Nozze di Caithness'



(Shot of Morse in Jaguar driving down leafy Oxfordshire lane on way to country house)

Morse: Think Lewis! Think! Why should he lie about the time of the shooting?

Lewis: What? You mean it wasn't suicide after all, sir?

Morse: I need a drink.

(They draw up outside "The Caithness Arms" at Chipping Snobbery)

Lewis: Orange juice for me, sir. I've got to pick the kids up from the scouts...

Morse: Listen, Lewis. The doctor says that time of death was 3.30 and the neighbour says that she heard a shot between 3 and 4. So why did his Lordship say that he discovered his wife *three hours* later?

Lewis: They can't both be right.

Morse: I know that, Lewis, but why didn't the coroner follow this up?

Lewis: Well, it's because they are all toffs, sir. His Lordship's a big shot round here.

Morse: Not very appropriate, Lewis.

(Morse smiles and sips pint of Old Scruton's Peculiar. Mozart plays in background. Cut to Police Chief's office.)

Fat Chief: Listen, matey. You've been asking too many questions. Caithness isn't some two-bit yobbo you picked up joyriding on the trading estate — he's a member of the aristocracy.

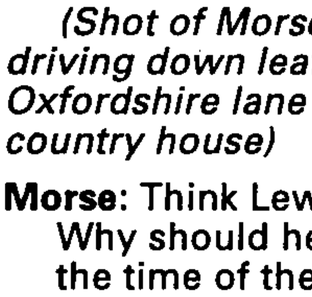
Morse: Oh, yes, and one of the funny handshake brigade, I bet...

Fat Chief: That's enough, Morse, and I don't want you listening to the dead wife's family either... They've got it in for his Lordship and always have had...

Morse: But they're right, there's something funny going on...

Fat Chief: Okay, Morse, that's it! I'm taking you off the case. Why don't you have a holiday? Get married and go down to Provence for a year...

(More Mozart plays. Titles roll)

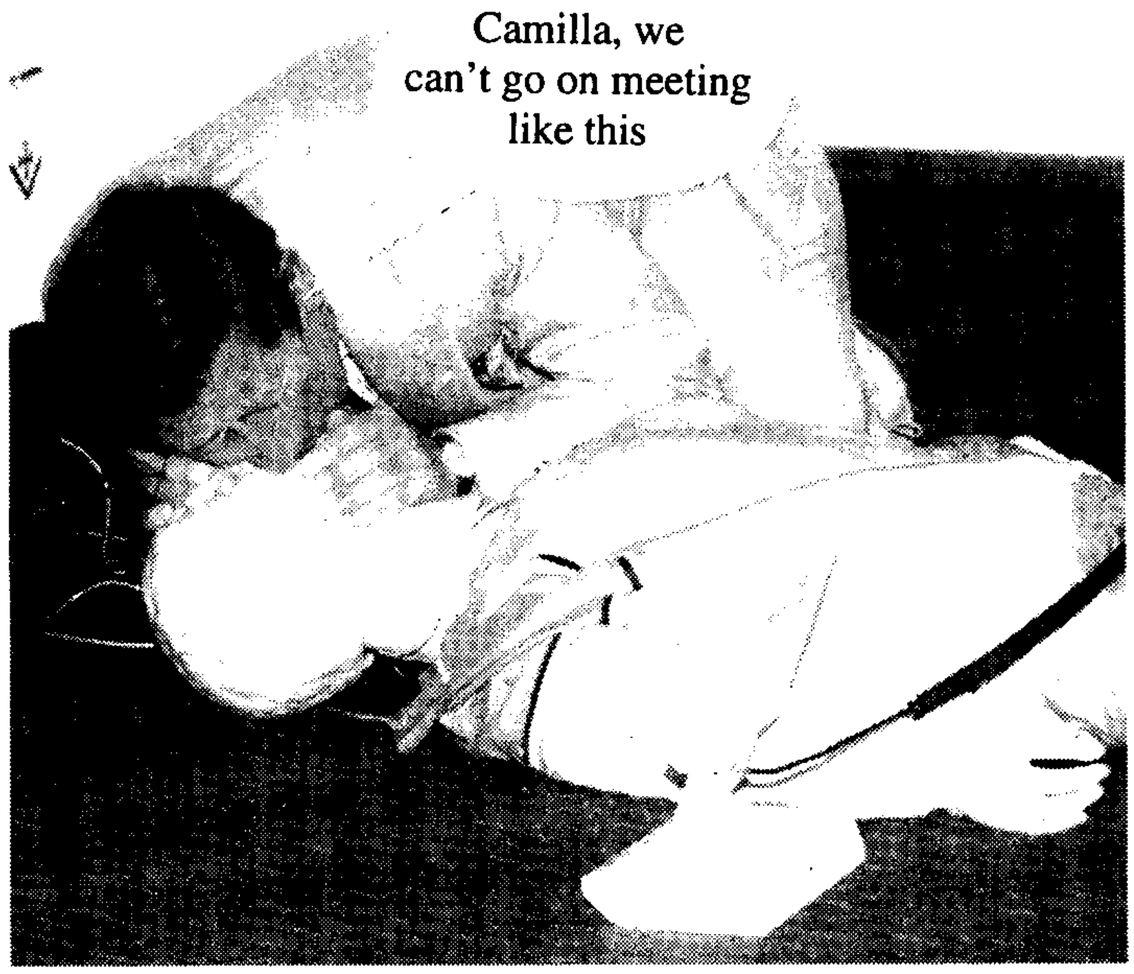


"Chalky" Spart

The Alternative Voice

"Chalky" Spart is General Secretary of the National Union of Learning Facilitators and Allied Underpaid Vocational Trades (NULFUAVT). He is the brother of activist David Spart.

ONCE again, the Tory Government has totally and sickeningly capitulated to all the demands of the teaching profession last year, er... er, which is why we are calling for an all-out total strike at the cynical attempts by this Government to crush the teaching unions by caving in completely and thus denying them their right to strike and cause industrial chaos in the classroom interface environment... er... and we shall proceed with this mandatory action until such time as the summer holidays begin *(Continued next year)*



EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

THE BETJEMAN LETTERS

In 1932 the young John Betjeman fell madly in love with Lady Camilla Sibbling-Rivalry, the sister of his Oxford friend Lord Brian de Walden. He called her by the affectionate name "Yellow Pages" and wrote her passionate letters all that summer.

June 14th 1932

Dear Snoopy,

It was wizard to see you at Archie's bash at Droppings. I'm so sorry Patrick crashed the car in the flower bed and was so beastly to Dumpling. I suppose he'll get over it. Won't you come with us to Casteloony next month, I want to show you the church at Bally High which has a wonderful reredos by Sir Gavin Stamp?

Love and kisses,
Your Bunty xxx

NOTE:
"Archie" was Lord Randolph Sowerbutt, the brother-in-law of Betjeman's Marlborough friend, Harry Doggers, known to his friends as extremely boring.

Betjeman (right) and Lord Anglepoyse at Oxford

(Continued all week)

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Thursday

I am extremely sorry to see that the woman whose name I don't mention has collapsed from exhaustion in Chile which is in South America. This shows how silly it is to try and go on and on when everyone knows that you are past it.

"That is very true," said my wife Norman, giving me one of her funny looks. "I am glad you see it that way."

Mrs Thatcher is in for another shock when she discovers that she is not the only one who can stand up for Britain against Europe.

I have made a speech today in Plymouth which is not in South America which makes it clear in no uncertain terms that I am not going to be pushed around by Monsieur Delors and all his friends. Oh no!

Friday

Today I have got even tougher than I got yesterday. When Mr Smith tried to make trouble about Europe in the House of Commons I was ready for him. I jumped to my feet with my ringbinder and read out one of my spontaneous jokes. "The right honourable gentleman is a poodle," I said, "doing a wee-wee on the lamp post of Brussels." Everyone laughed, even Mr Smith who pretended to look pleased. Mr Hurd was so amused he put his head in his hands and kept saying "Oh no!" again and again.

Saturday

I have had an idea which will in my judgement put an end to all the silly criticism in the press. I have decided to bring in Sir Bernard Ingham who was Mrs Thatcher's press adviser and who made her very popular in the opinion polls. Sir Bernard is a bluff Yorkshireman who speaks his mind, which everyone says is a good thing.

He came into my office and said: " 'Appen this'll be hard work. You're totally bloody useless." We have made a very good start.

Monday

In our regular emergency cabinet meeting Mr Heseltine considerably annoyed me by smiling and whistling all the time. "Things are very serious, Michael," I said in my stern voice. "I know," he said and burst out laughing.

Mr Portfolio, who is not my friend, asked me to clarify my position on European Enlargement. "It is very complex," I said, "but Mr Hurd will explain." Mr Hurd then unfolded a chart with all the countries and their flags on it. Under every country was a number of votes, just like with Torvill and Dean. I interrupted Mr Hurd to point out this ice skating parallel and Mr Redwood said: "Oh I see. Britain is going to lose again."

Anyway, according to Mr Hurd, the whole question is how many points you need to stop the Europeans doing whatever they want. We say 23. And they say 27. "There is no room for compromise," I told everyone. "We stand firm at 23."

Tuesday

Mr Hurd has come back from Greece having agreed to 27. He tells me this is a great triumph. "Did we not stand firm on 23?" I asked him crossly. "We did," he replied, "but then we gave in. It was a tactical move. However the decision is up to you, prime minister. I can only advise you that if you don't agree to 27 then I'll resign and bring down your government."

"That sounds sensible," I replied. "But I would like some time to think about it."

"You've got thirty seconds," he said. "The EC deadline is at 5 o'clock."

"Well then," I concluded. "It is agreed."

Wednesday

Mr Ingham has not proved as successful as I hoped. All the papers are saying that I did a humiliating U-turn over the Eurovoting affair. It is however quite obvious that this is untrue. Mr Hurd did it.

The papers also say that I should resign and Mr Heseltine should take over as prime minister. Don't they remember what happened last time they said this? Mr Heseltine looked foolish and I became prime minister. The same thing will happen this time, particularly as I am already prime minister.

Thursday

My friend Mr Clarke has come to my rescue with a firm message of support. He told the radio listeners: "John Major has my full support so long as he remains Prime Minister, which may not be very long." I am very grateful to him for this loyalty. "He is not like Mr Heseltine," I said to my wife Norman, "who is trying to stab me in the back." "No," she agreed. "Mr Clarke will just stab you in the front."

April 1st

Today the Cabinet played a very funny joke on me. They all said that I should resign immediately. How I laughed! It was an April Fool, of course, and they were just teasing me. Strangely, it was after 12 o'clock when you are not supposed to do April Fool tricks any more, but I said nothing about this. I did however assure them that I had no intention of resigning. Then they all laughed and told me that this was the best joke of all.

April 2nd

Mr Clarke had a rather late April Fool joke, which was telling everyone that his tax increases were only the equivalent of two pints of beer a week.

We all believed this until Mr Portfolio spoilt the fun by pointing out that actually the new taxes will cost every taxpayer the equivalent of five bottles of whisky a day.

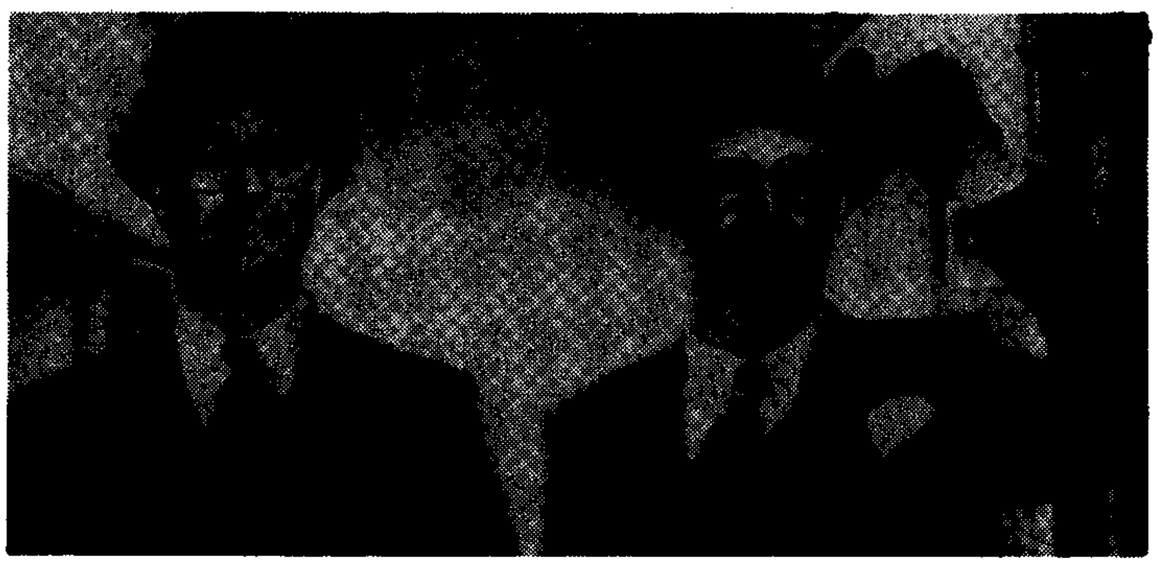
Tuesday

Today I went to Essex which is a place near London which is famous for its jokes and where everyone is a Conservative. Mr Meyer said that it was a morale-boosting exercise. I said: "What is the point of that if they are all Conservatives anyway?" It is *your* morale that will be boosted, not theirs," he told me.

When we got to Billericay it was raining and there was no one there. "For security reasons, they do not know that you are coming," explained Mr Meyer with an odd look on his face.

On our way home, Mr Meyer asked me if I had heard the latest Essex joke. "You," he said. I did not get it.

TV HIGHLIGHTS



HURD AND MAJOR

by P. G. Wodehouse

(The Drones Club. Bertie Major is sitting in an armchair surrounded by the other Drones, i.e. "Oofy" Portillo, "Brown Shoes" Clarke, "Hang 'Em" Howard and "Arsy" Gummer)

Major: My man Hurd has really pulled it off again over this Euro-lark.

(Drones all laugh)

Major: We could have been in a terrible scrape but, thanks to Hurd's first-class brain, everything's hotsy-totsy again.

(Drones pelt Major with bread rolls. Scene shifts to Major's apartment in Downing Street. Hurd is packing Major's valise)

Major: I say, Hurd, there I was in the Club singing your praises when some of the members gave me the old bread roll treatment.

Hurd: Really, sir?

Major: Just tell me again about this coup you've pulled off.

Hurd: It's somewhat complicated, sir. Perhaps another time would be more suitable, one when there is less packing to do.

Major: No time like the present, Hurd. What was it that your Latin friend Horace said? "Tempus fugit" was it?

Hurd: Indeed, sir.

Major: Come on then, friend Hurd, spill the bally beans.

Hurd: Well, sir, our initial demand for a retention of the status quo vis-a-vis our powers of veto in the enlarged Council was merely a negotiating ploy making it possible for us to win a compromise at a later stage which was what we actually wanted in the first place.

Major *(after long pause)*: But what about all that stuff I was doing à la Aunt Magatha at her worst? You know — giving Johnny Euro a bloody nose and so forth?

Hurd: That, I would submit, sir, played a useful part in the securing of our ultimate policy aim.

Major: It made us look like bloody fools, though, didn't it, when we ended up coming home with our tail between our legs, what?

Hurd: Quite the contrary, sir. May I suggest that we look upon this as a considerable diplomatic triumph...

Major: Then why, for Pete's sake, is there all this talk about you resigning?

Hurd: I understood, sir, that the person whose resignation was being so avidly sought was not myself.

Major: Not "Oofy" Portillo, surely?

Hurd *(putting all Major's suits in large tea chest)*: *No*, sir.

Major: Well, who then?

Hurd: It is not my place to say, sir. *(Doorbell rings)* Ah. That must be the pantechnicon generously provided for you by Messrs Pickford.

Major: Hang on, Hurd. I'm only going away for the weekend.

Hurd: I fear not, sir. You may be gone for some considerable time, like the late lamented Captain Oates, who, you may remember, felt obliged to step outside the tent for the good of everyone else.

Major: Are you taking the Michael, Hurd?

Hurd: In a manner of speaking, sir. I gather Mr Heseltine will be requiring my services.

(Hurd begins to whistle "Goodbye Jolly Grey")

INDEPENDENTE DI MILANO

VOTA HEZZA!

Friday, 8 April, 1994

Unknown media millionaire to become Prime Minister

by Our Man In London **Conrad Blackshirt**

A NATION sick of corruption and sleaze has turned to a hitherto little-known tycoon to try and end the run of scandal and political intrigue that has paralysed the country for so long.

He is Michaelangelo Heseltini, 59, the magazine and local radio magnate who made a fortune from trade papers like *Journale Lithoprinteri* and *Advertismento e Huomi di Advertismento* before entering politics.

NEAR DEATH IN VENICE

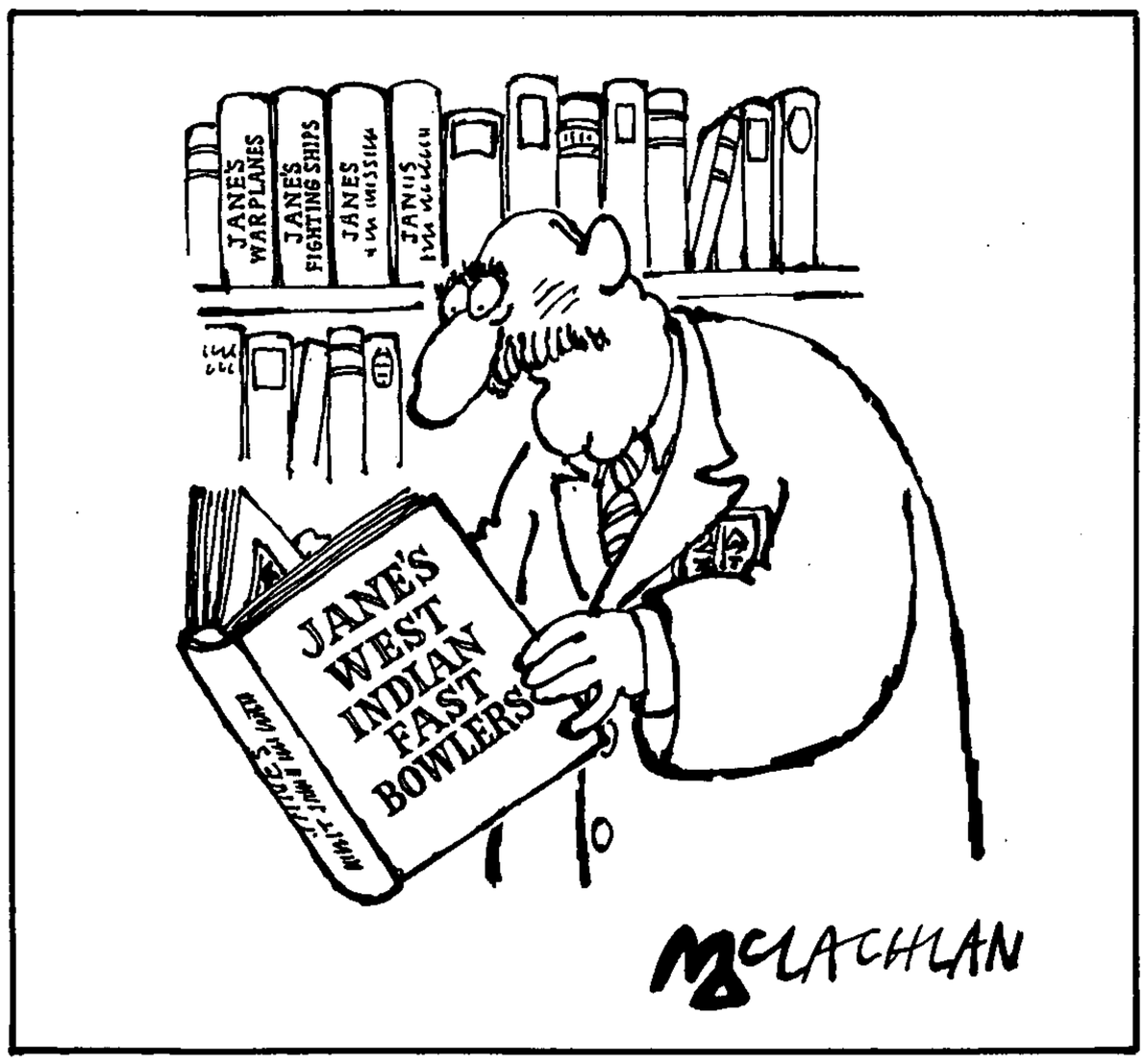
The good-looking, suave millionaire has certainly got charisma but no one has any idea what it is he stands for.

He has recently appealed to the right-wing in a series of barn-storming speeches but he remains vague on policy. His slogan "Vota Hezza" is designed as a rallying cry for both left and right to unite behind him for the good of the country.

STALKING HEZZA

However Musseltini is not as squeaky clean as his supporters claim, being implicated in the notorious Matrix-Churchill affair when with various now discredited politicians he signed a P2 certificate designed to cover up compromising evidence of malpractice.

His only rival, the portly, outspoken centre-right Kennini Clarko *(continued p.94)*



Out Damned Spot

New Formula Persil washes away the worst bloodstains says Angus McDeayton

The Glamis Herald

Floral sweetness Persil Jeanne McLaren

Macbeth defends wife – 'Saintly, selfless public servant' says former Thane

by HENRY THE PORTER

THE controversial new king of Scotland, King Macbeth, today spoke out in defence of his wife, Lady Hillary Macbeth, whom many critics have called "the power behind the throne".

Cawdor What A Scorcher

At an emotional press conference in the dungeon of the Castle, the king told scribes of his deep distress over the recent "Duncangate" allegations.

- **It is rumoured that the unexpected death of King Duncan, a close member of the Macbeth circle, may well have had something to do with the Macbeths and Lady Macbeth in particular.**
- **It is further claimed that the suicide of long-term Macbeth associate, Banquo, may also have had a political motive.**

But the king firmly rebutted any such reports, saying: "My wife has the finest moral compass of anyone I know." He also said that the allegations had left Lady Macbeth very distressed and that she had had to call in medical help following attacks of sleepwalking.

Banker's Ghost

There were also unconfirmed reports that the King himself had been subject to hallucinations and that a recent reception at the castle had to called off suddenly after the king was "taken ill". Suggestions that the king may have "seen ghosts" after indulging in marijuana were dismissed by an official spokesman.

Weather Forecast for Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

With IAN MACBETHKILL

A LARGE area of trees is now on the move in the Birnam area which is expected to reach Dunsinane by tomorrow midday.

Cooking Tips

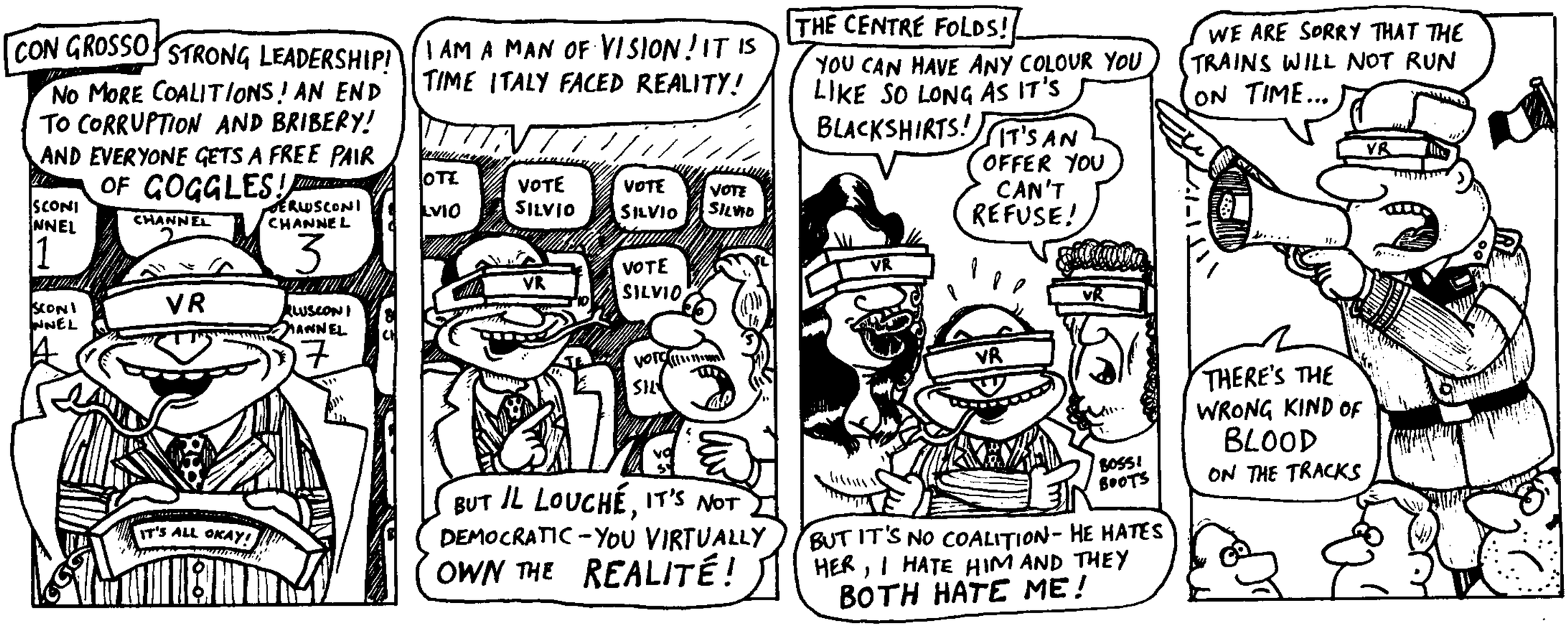
with THE WEIRD SISTERS

TAKE ONE Eye of Newt, one Toe of Frog, one Wool of Bat and one Tongue of Dog. Bring to the boil and put in the microwave in a non-metallic receptacle. *(Shurely shome mishtake?)*

On Other Pages

Your Thanes Tonight 7
"The Devil Damn Thee Black, Thou Cream Faced Loon" by Peter McKay 9
Unfunny Cartoon by Mac . 12

VIRTUAL REALITY – FORZA ITALIA! BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ


CON GROSSO
STRONG LEADERSHIP! NO MORE COALITIONS! AN END TO CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY! AND EVERYONE GETS A FREE PAIR OF GOGGLES!
CHANNEL 2
CHANNEL 3
VR
IT'S ALL OKAY!
I AM A MAN OF VISION! IT IS TIME ITALY FACED REALITY!
VOTE SILVIO
BUT IL LOUCHÉ, IT'S NOT DEMOCRATIC – YOU VIRTUALLY OWN THE REALITÉ!
THE CENTRE FOLDS!
YOU CAN HAVE ANY COLOUR YOU LIKE SO LONG AS IT'S BLACKSHIRTS!
IT'S AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE!
BOSS! BOOTS
BUT IT'S NO COALITION – HE HATES HER, I HATE HIM AND THEY BOTH HATE ME!
WE ARE SORRY THAT THE TRAINS WILL NOT RUN ON TIME...
THERE'S THE WRONG KIND OF BLOOD ON THE TRACKS

WHO WILL BE PRESIDENT OF GREAT BRITAIN?

AN opinion poll commissioned by GNOMI shows that 99% of people in Britain now favour an end to the monarchy and the creation of a Presidency.

We asked our readers who they thought would make the ideal First President of the new Republic of Britain.

1%

LORD DEEDES, 99. Highly respected former Cabinet Minister and journalist. Deedes's column on lawnmowers in the Saturday Telegraph makes him the ideal choice.

1.3%

JOHN MORTIMER, 72. Highly respected playwright and left-wing thinker, Mortimer's views on fox-hunting (pro) and capital punishment (anti) command widespread admiration across the board.

1.7%

STEPHEN FRY, 46. Although young in comparison to other candidates, Fry's views on celibate homosexuality (for) and adverts for Building Societies (for) have made him one of the most commanding figures in Britain today.

2.1%

DAME BARBARA CARTLAND, 117. Highly respected by no one except Colonel Gadaffi, this prolific novelist has strong views on sex (anti), pekinese dogs (for) and the late Lord Mountbatten (don't know).

0.3%

ALAN CLARK, 49. An outspoken maverick, diarist and philanderer, Clark lives in a castle which would be ideal for entertaining Heads of State were he to get the job as President. Clark is anti fox-hunting but pro arms sales to Saddam Hussein, thus having an across-the-board appeal. *(See John Mortimer)*

1.6%

SIR PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE, 85. Though completely mad, Sir Peregrine is highly respected by the Sunday Telegraph and has a titled wife. His habit of deliberately breaking wind in public may, however, count against him.

3.2%

FRANK BRUNO, 57. Highly respected pantomime performer and amateur boxer. Frank would appeal to ethnic minorities as well as sports fans. If made President, Frank could dispense with bodyguards, thus saving the country valuable resources.

0.03%

BARBARA CASTLE, 96. Highly respected MEP and former Labour Transport Minister responsible for the introduction of seatbelts. Her views on seatbelts (pro) and driving without seatbelts (anti) make her ideal as an alternative woman's choice to Barbara Cartland.

2.1%

RABBI LIONEL BLUE, 78. Familiar to Radio Four listeners with his popular catchphrase "Hello John, Hello Sue". The Rabbi has a huge ecumenical following and combines traditional wisdom with a down-to-earth sense of humour. If President, he could, however, face problems with visitng Arab sheikhs.

99.9%

THE FORMER QUEEN, 67. Her Majesty's experience of over 40 years as Head of State makes her the ideal choice as President of any new republic. As Mrs Windsor she would still command considerable respect across the board. *(See Salman Rushdie)*

GLENDA SLAGG

...First Lady Buck of Fleet Street

■ SO, Michael Aspel!?! This is your noo wife!?! Geddit!!? Irene Clark I'm talkin' about Mr Smoothy Chops!?! At 62, you should know better than to go a-moochin' and a-smoochin' with some telly-totty young enough to be your granddaughter!!?? No wonder loverlorn little Lizzie (that's Mrs A, stoopid!?!) is left at home a-weepin' and a-wailin'!!?!? There's a word for you, Mr Gropin' Granpa, but this is a family paper and they wouldn't allow me to use it!!?? BASTARD!!??!

□ MICHAEL Aspel?!! Don'tchaluv-him??! OK so he's left his boring old wife for a backroom beauty from the glamorous world of television!!?! So what?! We're not livin' in the Middle Ages for Gawd's sake!? This is 1994 and we're surely adult enough to understand that sometimes a fella likes to say goodbye to his Missus and go off for a bit of late night chat (geddit?!?). That's what I call Aspel and *COMPANY*!?! Geddit?!?

■ *DI?!! Aren'tchasickofher??! Just because the paparazzi came a-spyin' and a-pryin' on her skiing holiday, Princess Toffeenose threw a wobbly!!? Who does she think she is?!! If it wasn't for the likes of Signor Zoomilenzi (Geddit?!) no one would ever have heard of her?!! Go on!?! Piste off you spoilt slimline Sloane!?!?!?*

● SO Coronation Street's favourite landlady, Big Boobs Bet, is to get her own chat show as Britain's answer to Oprah Winfrey!?! Don't make me laugh!!?! You might be OK pulling pints at the Rover's, sweetheart, but you won't be much good when it comes to pulling the punters!!?! Geddit?!? If Wogan can't do it, what makes you think you've got what it takes?!!

□ *HATS off to Bighearted Bet, the blonde bombshell behind the bar in the Rover's!?! Now she's set to beat Wogan at his own game!?! Pack it in, Tell!! You can't compete with the charismatic charmer from Coronation Street?!?* (This is terrible. You're fired. Ed.)

■ HERE they are, Glenda's April shower!!?

SIR GEORGE GARDINER, Head of the 1992 Committee!?! Hi there, Georgie-Porgie, fancy coming and making this little girl cry??!

LORD TREFGARNE, former Defence Minister. You ran rings round Justice Scott but you won't get away from me so easily!!? Mmmmmmmm!?!

CHIEF MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI. Crazy name, very crazy guy!!

Byeeeeeeee!!

LEASE/ PURCHASE of existing profitable DIY/ Bldg materials Co. in..thieving Chesh./Merseyside location offered.

Sale & Altrincham Messenger

Controversy, quality, style

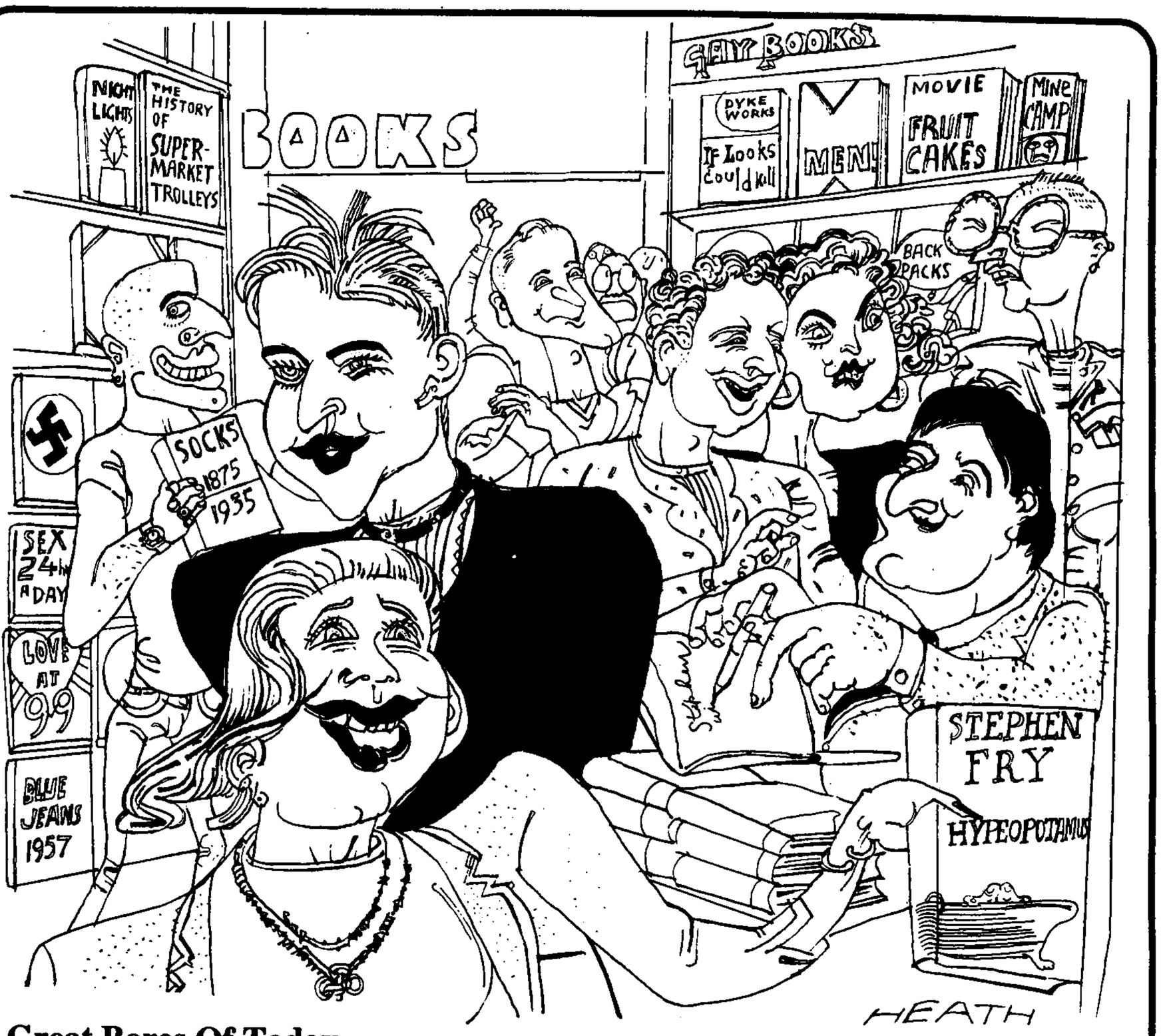
PETER McLIE

AFTER all his trials and tribulations John Major has certainly picked a winner this time. The issue of European voting rights may seem obscure but Major has rightly sensed that folk like to see the Brussels Brigade being told where to get off. And the Prime Minister has done exactly that. No wonder the Press is hailing him as the new Mrs Thatcher!

☐ **WHY HASN'T the Queen been to see *Shadowlands*, I should like to know? It looks like a deliberate snub for Oxford university. The Royal Family has always favoured Cambridge, I am told by my friends at the palace. Or could it be that the Queen is about to become a Roman Catholic and wants nothing to do with a famous Anglican clergyman like the Reverend Tolkien? I think the public deserves an answer.**

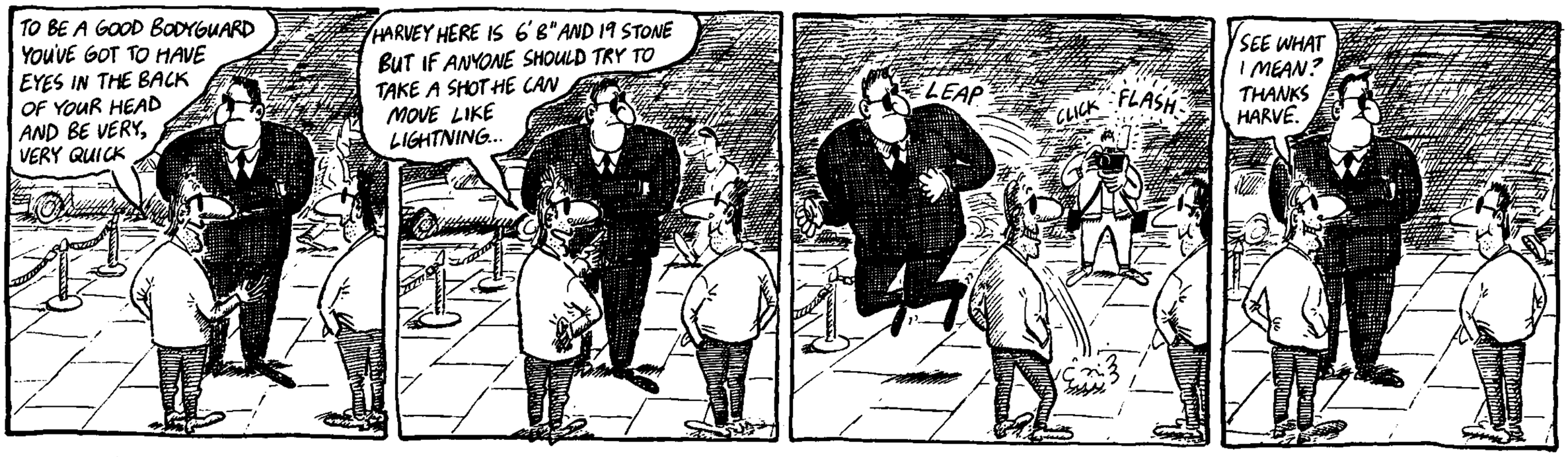
☐ *MY FRIEND Andrew Wilson tells me he has done nothing particularly interesting this week. I notice that more and more people are following his example. This could catch on don't you think? Isn't life just dandee and grandee?*

☐ HAVE YOU noticed those funny little green things coming out of trees? They certainly weren't there a week ago. And yet now nearly every tree I see out of the train window has these curious unexplained little growths on them. But nobody seems to want to point this out. Is it something to do with political correctness? I however shall watch these wee green beasties with interest and until told otherwise will call them 'electric kettles'. (This is wonderful. B. Pad.)



Great Bores Of Today.

"... he's got a brain the size of Norfolk it's amazing did you see him on *University Challenge* when he got every answer right and he knew the 15th letter of the alphabet almost before the question was asked? 'O' amazing did you know he was in prison once when he was younger? and he was so good as Jeeves with that other bloke he's amazing at anagrams he comes up with them just like that 'I am John Major' is 'O marjoram I' or maybe it was another one anyway he's 90% gay apparently but he's celibate and has been for ten years he's got a country house just like in that film with Emma Thompson what was it called? Blue Peter was it? anyway he's got a brain the size of Wales and this novel is amazing it's about this drunk old poet who goes to the Groucho Club except it's called the Harpo Club d'you see? brilliant and er... well there's this boy who does it with this horse which is bizarre but it's still brilliant almost as good as Ben Elton which is an anagram of Noble Ten I thought that one up actually I'll send it to Stephen no this book is a number one bestseller already he must be worth millions and millions especially when you think of all those adverts I love the one where he does the joke about a smooth-talking bar steward... *bar steward* you see it's like bastard except it's bar steward he's got a brain the size of the whole planet..."


TO BE A GOOD BODYGUARD YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD AND BE VERY, VERY QUICK
HARVEY HERE IS 6' 8" AND 19 STONE BUT IF ANYONE SHOULD TRY TO TAKE A SHOT HE CAN MOVE LIKE LIGHTNING...
LEAP
CLICK
FLASH
SEE WHAT I MEAN? THANKS HARVE.

Chester Square SW1

Dear Bill,

Did you get my PC from Tierra del Fuego? What a grisly place, a godforsaken windswept wilderness, very reminiscent of the Falklands. The old girl sat in the local W H Schmidt in the airport concourse for three hours and only managed to shift two copies of Los Años de la Calle Downing de Señora Thatcher, in both cases to very old German war criminals pretending to be sheep farmers.

You may have seen the dramatic moment at the dinner in Santiago when the Boss did her George Bush impression and slid graciously under the table during her big speech. I would like to make it quite clear that it wasn't the electric soup. I blame it on our host in Chile, old General Pinochet. He is officially retired now, and lives in a very agreeable little bunker with armed guards round the pool and Rottweilers snarling in the corridors every time you get up in the night to take a pee. This, as you can imagine, is on account of the threat from the Lefties, who seem to think he is still running the country.

He and M., needless to say, got on like the proverbial towering inferno, while Yours Truly had to make small talk with the doughty Señora P., the heavily scarred veteran of several wrestling bouts in the political arena with a chestful of medals and a heavy moustache.

As he showed us round his Museum of Interrogation Technology, the old boy took Margaret's arm – la Señora already had a pretty firm grip on mine – and explained his philosophy of retirement. "I give you one word of advice, my dear Iron Lady, and that is Terror. Your little Mr Major, for an example, I would have no trouble with him. One visit to my Dentist, he attach the electrodes, and Mr Major sing along with you, no trouble."

Margaret seemed fascinated by this new approach to party unity, and was in such perky spirits that she very foolishly accepted a selection of what the Señora described as "little nibbles" as blotting paper for our goldfish bowls of Tequila Josef Mengele. They looked absolutely disgusting to me, and I declined on the grounds that I was trying to shed a pound or two for the summer's golf, but Margaret got her nose well into the trough, spitting bits out every time she thought of some new torment for Friend Major.

As the old murderer escorted us to our armoured car I asked him what they were made out of, and he told me "Chihuahuas - Minced up very fine, is local delicacy, no wastage, use all parts of the animal." Margaret fortunately did not overhear this, and I was able to persuade her en route to the official reception that she had consumed some kind of game bird strangled by the General with his own hands.

I don't know whether you remember the night Maurice addressed the Ladies' Needlework Circle at the Bishop's Palace in Rochester, but I detected the same slight quaking of the shoulders and wooziness in the voice as she neared her peroraration on the need for Anglo-Chilean Understanding and the suppression of Communism linked to a plea to buy her book while stocks lasted. I did notice that she had repeated the same sentence four times, but assumed it was a rhetorical device to hammer home her point. Then she slid under the table, and all hell was let loose. The Chief of Police, who was sitting next to me, hissed in my ear that that was the fifteenth assassination that week, and rolled out of his chair to go and hose down the waiting crowds outside with his machine-gun. Knowing what she had had for high tea chez the Generalissimo I was convinced myself that the chihuahuas had reaped their deadly harvest. But I noticed that she was still growling slightly and muttering the name of Major, and thought it was at least worth calling an ambulance.

Several stomach pumps later the Boss was back on the Sales Trail swearing she'd never felt fitter... On touching down at Brize Norton she was on her mobiphone in an instant talking to that greasy Spaniard Portillo, asking him if he knew the name of a good dentist. It emerged that poor Major was groggy and about to go down for the ninth time, and that Tarzan and Fatso Clarke had already thrown their sombreros into the ring. "Michael has seen the light", I heard Portillo's voice crackling in Margaret's ear, "he is one of us!" "Nonsense!", snapped the Boss, "You have a lot to learn. We are to rally behind Clarke, who will lose the election." "And then?" I heard the crazed voice crackling, "Der Tag?" "Michael, control yourself!" Margaret soothed, "Our hour has not yet come!"

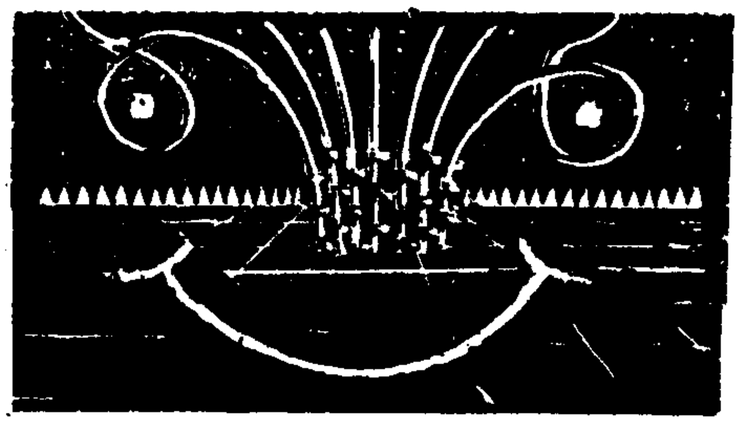
I sometimes wonder why I didn't take a double dose of chihuahua while the opportunity presented itself. When I think, Bill, I could have been scattered over the Andes by now.

Shall I see you at Maurice's fund-raising beano for his new Liver Transplant?

Yours up a gumtree as per usual,

Denis

DIARY



TIM RICE

Came up with a truly smasherooni lyric at Easter. It's just a germ at the mo, but I'm hopping that — whoops — there goes my spelling! — smack-botty-time, Timothy! — I'm sorry, I'll say that again! — I'm *hoping* that the germ'll spread into a truly brill musical all about what happened on that first amazing Easter, literally years ago, somewhere incredibly abroad. To me, that first Easter is basically just one helluva great story, when the very first great big Easter Egg was opened, and everyone went absolutely wild and pigged out in no uncertain fashion on all the choccie and the sweeties inside and the first Easter bunny hop-hop-hopped around to the delight of all children everywhere.

For all the Rice buffs among you, the aforesaid germ's called 'Easter Egg!', or 'Egg!' for short, the tune's a bit like the one for 'Superstar!' and the lyrics go something like this:

Easter Egg!
Easter Egg!
Easter Egg!
Easter Egg!
Do you think your name is really Reg?

So far, the germ's not completely full-blown, but with some instrumental work and maybe some totally amazing sets and a bit of a dinky overture I have high hopes we can make it spread to the full three hours. And the great news is that Elaine Paige has said she's very, very interested. Methinks it should be TT - or Totally Triff!

Like many artistes in the music biz, though I may seem to the rest of you to be a bit of a groover, I have a serious, more reflective side to my character. In fact, my enemies might accuse me of being pretty thoughtful at times. And that's why I support John Major and the Conservative Party and all they're trying to do on behalf of us all both in Europe and abroad. Luckily, the Prime Minister and I are both fully paid up cricket nuts, never happier than when zonking around with bat and ball! Anyway, the smashing news is that John — great bloke, nice sense of humour — has asked me to write a lyric for the Conservatives to help them slaughter the socialists at the next election. So far, I've just about got the first two lines fully polished —

Major!
Is all the rage. Er.

— and once I've got a rhyme for 'quite happily married to Norma' it'll be in the can, as the rest is mainly fanfares and trumpet voluntaries. Incidentally, Andy Lloyd Webber's knocking off the music, which should finally put paid to those who maintain there's some sort of 'rift' between us. Baloney: if Andrew wants to churn out universally successful money-making smash hit musicals, then good luck to him, and I admire the single-minded way he's always been absolutely determined to get exactly what he wants come what may, but frankly that's not my bag, I'd much rather devote my life to less obvious cult musicals with much shorter, more exclusive runs, well away from the money men of Broadway. Andrew's a terrific guy and I wish him all the luck in the world. If that's what he wants. Cheers!

Latest truly groovy proj is getting Cliff to star as Heathcliff in a musical based on the totally haunting Jane Austen novel of the same name. Take it from me. In some amazing way Cliff just completely *becomes* Heathcliff, so that I honestly guess that future generations will come to think of Heathcliff as this extraordinary guy in blue satin flares, a bright red cravat, beautiful lapels and a beautiful gold medallion, singing his heart out to the most memorabelissimo lyrics by — you guessed it! — yours truly:

I'm Heathcliff
I hardly ever sniff
Anybody here seen Cathy?
Talk about daffy!
Just nipping out to the lavvy
So keep ca-ve
'Cos my hair's all wavey
Gotta play that riff!
'Cos they call me Heath
Though my first name's Cliff!
***Chorus:** Catherine! Catherine! Catherine!*
Did you take a bit of a batterin'?

If that doesn't knock 'em for six, nothing will. By the way-zi-o, if any of you swingers out there are dreaming that you, too, might one day be able to earn a decent crust at the old lyric game, might I just draw your attention to an important but highly complex point? If you look at the last word of each line — 'Cathy', 'daffy', 'lavvy', 'ca-ve' and 'wavey' — you will note something totally unexpected and brilliant about 'em: they all *rhyme*. Most people probably think the job of a lyricist is as easy as falling off the proverbial wall, but this goes to show the amazing technical sleight-of-hand and sheer bloody *craft* needed to produce a truly memorable lyric. While we're on the old subjectio, not many people know that 'lyric' is an anagram of 'cyril'. Sorry! — I'm an absolute fund of such useless — but highly entertaining — information!!

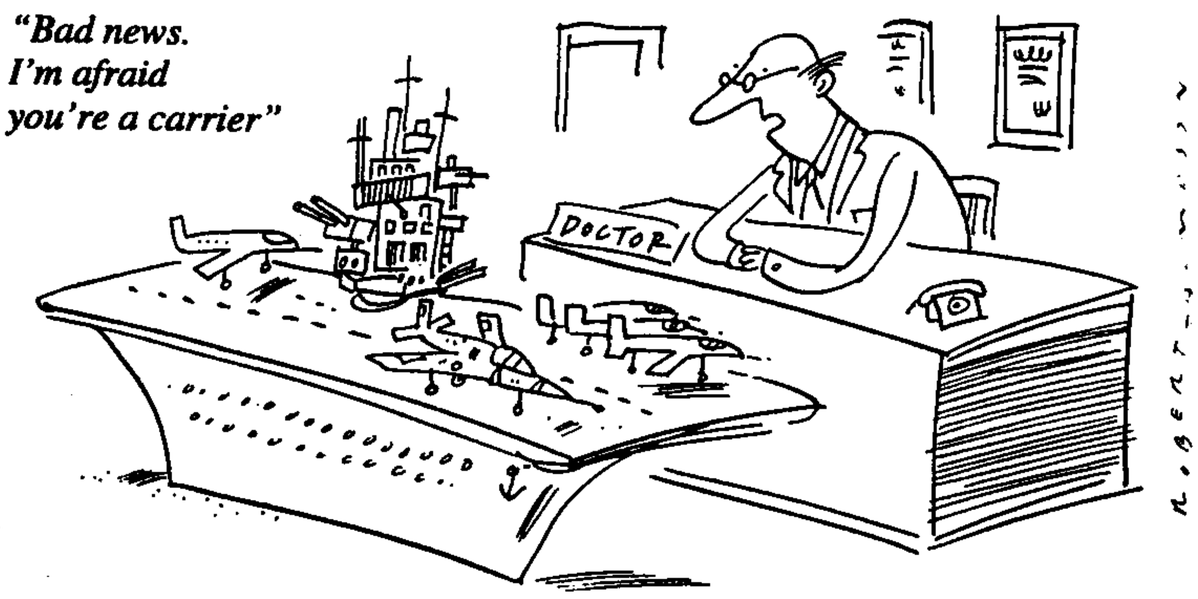
It's a well-known fact that I've been the *numero uno* fan of rock 'n' roll — in my book the greatest art form ever invented by man — since I first heard the immortal Bill Haley utterly knock my brains out with that awe-inspiring work of genius, 'See You Later, Alligator'. Frankly, what the big T.R. (that's me, folks!) doesn't know about rock music isn't worth writing on the back of a postage stamp.

I'm not saying I'm more intelligent than anyone else, but it sometimes surprises me that supposedly "clever" blokes get by with so little true knowledge. F'r'instance, I bumped into a geezer by the name of Dr Jonathan Miller the other day. Brainy? That's what people say. But after first establishing — to my considerable disappointment — that he wasn't related to Frankie Miller, Roger Miller, Steve Miller, Glenn Miller, or even Gary 'Yellow Rose of Texas' Miller, I set about testing that so-called intelligence.

"Okay, Jonathan," I said. "Which British singer had two number sevens in sixty three followed by a number nine and a number six in sixty four nothing at all in sixty five and then two successive number ones in sixty six before dropping to thirty three in sixty seven and then waiting five long years before charting at twenty one in seventy two?"

Honestly, I'm not kidding when I tell you he didn't have the foggiest. So I bowled him another, this time a complete dolly. "Which five piece band achieved three number ones in eighty three staying in the charts for forty six weeks then returned as a three piece or trio to record a song originally made famous by a seven-piece in fifty nine rising to number six in eighty seven?" Not a clue!

At that point I vamoosed PDQ, 'cos I was worried he wouldn't even know which major recording artiste climbed to number seven in ninety one before dropping to twelve in ninety two — a full eleven years after reaching number nineteen in eighty one. Some blokes!



"Bad news. I'm afraid you're a carrier"

HAVE A FRENCH STUDENT TO STAY
We are looking for
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 13 - 17, OR COUPLE WHO ARE TEACHERS
To welcome one French boy or girl 'En Famine'.
Derby Evening Telegraph

Part-time NANNY/ HOUSEKEEPER
required for two school age children and working parents. Village location, must be car driver, non-smoking cat, lover mandatory.
Hitchin Comet

Literary Review

Anne Frankly it isn't

Zlata's Diary — A Child's Life in Sarajevo
Zlata Filipovi
(Viking, £9.99)

LAST YEAR it was Little Irma, this year middling Zlata. *Zlata's Diary* is a publishing phenomenon, currently the bestselling hardback in the country (hotly pursued by Stephen Fry's mucky novel *The Hippopotamus*).

Viking has pushed it along with adroit packaging. Although full priced, the book is cutely tiny, even smaller than a normal paperback, so picking it up feels as though you really are reading somebody else's kitsch little diary. Funnily enough, the photograph of Zlata smiling timidly on the cover shows that her original journal was actually A4.

Over the last few weeks it has been repeatedly alleged that substantial chunks of the diary are fake and the work of an adult; either a Unicef apparatchik or a Bosnian propagandist. Clare Alexander, the airhead director of its British publisher Viking, Janine di Giovanni, the *Sunset Times* hack who supplies the introduction, and Zlata herself, now 13 and living in Paris, have all indignantly denied it.

"My diary is my diary — and the message it carries is mine, even if every child in Sarajevo could write the same diary with the same message to the world," announced Zlata in a letter to the *Guardian*. It's perfectly true no doubt. The diary itself is unremarkable enough. Those who dispute its provenance have got things the wrong way around. What's extraordinary is not the book's contents but the amazing success it has won around the world. And the publicity boom is still growing: Zlata has just appeared on American chatshows; the audiobook is on the way; Universal Studios has bought the film rights...

Yet the text is completely banal — even, despite the dramatic circumstances of residence in the besieged city, pretty boring. This is no discredit to a child who was 11 when she began writing the thing. It's an eye-opener about the cretinous emotionalism of the public, however.

The conflict in former Yugoslavia has always been vexatiously complicated. Although it's all very upsetting, it's been quite hard to know who to blame and who to pity, hasn't it? It's not just the Serbs apparently. There are lots of different sides to start with, and they all seem capable of being completely beastly, given half a chance. What are we to think? What can we do?

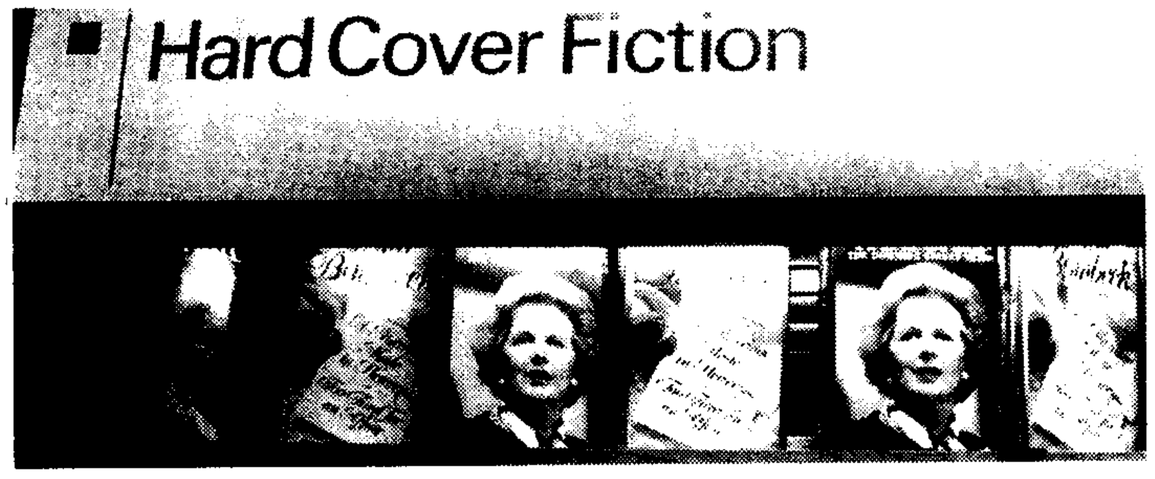
All that pent up feeling needs a vent. Relief has come in the form of sentimental outbursts over a few guaranteed innocents: children (girls only, of course). Little Irma jerked the tearducts satisfactorily for a while. Now *Zlata's Diary* permits a more extensive form of empathy. People are buying the book because, in a way, they enjoy it. Grotesquely, the market it is tapping is the one formerly cornered by Mrs Miniver and *The Diary of an Edwardian Country Lady*.

Zlata's daily interests are normal for her age: swotting, MTV, pizzas, Madonna, her teachers, a kitten and a canary. One day, a mouse gets into the house. "Mummy screamed. She climbed on to a chair and then ran off into my room. I know she would have liked to run out of the house, but... THERE'S A WAR ON." On 26 July 1992, Zlata even mentions that she has just read *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*. At the time, she was 11 and — well, a half, as it happens.

It is Zlata's set-piece denunciations of "politics" that have struck critics as phoney. "Among my girlfriends, among our friends, in our family, there are Serbs and Croats and Muslims. It's a mixed group and I never knew who was a Serb, a Croat or a Muslim. Now politics has started meddling around. It has put an 'S' on Serbs, an 'M' on Muslims and a 'C' on Croats, it wants to separate them. And to do so it has chosen the worst, blackest pencil of all — the pencil of war which spells only misery and death. Why is politics making us unhappy...?" she asks. "We are living in fear, we are suffering, we are not enjoying the sun and flowers, we are not enjoying our childhood. WE ARE CRYING."

It does sound like run of the mill educational material put out by UNICEF, the organisation that first published *Zlata's Diary*, doesn't it? You can just see this speech in thought bubbles coming out of badly drawn strip-cartoons of charmingly multi-racial kids, can't you?

But that doesn't mean Zlata didn't write it herself. Sure she did. And what that perfect match confirms is the abject infantilism of the United Nations and its subsidiaries. If only people would all be nice to each other!



Toronto Airport

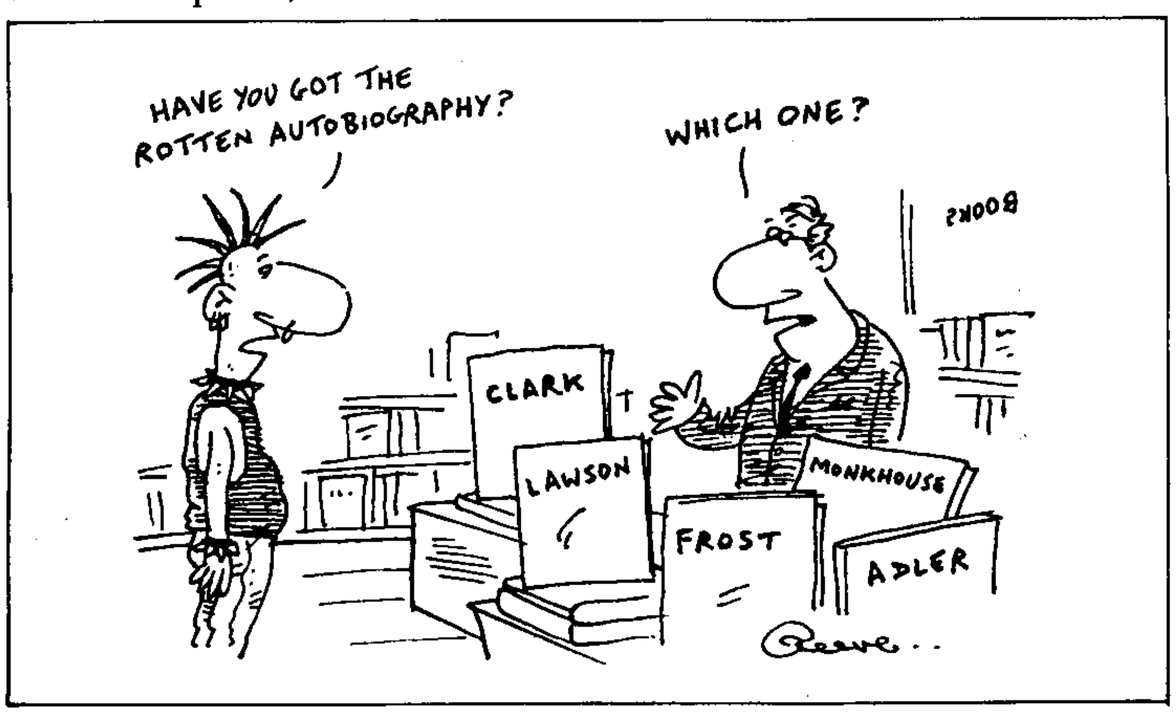
No doubt Zlata understood what was expected of her. By the time she wrote this, halfway through her diary, she already knows it is going to be published by UNICEF, so her claim "I wrote my diary for myself" is not quite correct. Nor is another complaint: "Some people say that I compare myself with Anne Frank. But it is not me, but other people, who dared to call me the 'Anne Frank' of Sarajevo."

Yet right at the start of the diary, Zlata says: "Hey, Diary! You know what I think? Since Anne Frank called her diary Kitty, maybe I could give you a name too." So she does: "Mimmy". Soon she's telling Mimmy how much she loves her. Her imitation of Anne Frank is explicit.

A year later, after the initial publication of the diary, an alarming thought strikes Zlata: "Some people compare me with Anne Frank. That frightens me, Mimmy. I don't want to suffer her fate." Emulation has its limits.

In a sense though, Zlata has imitated Anne Frank effectively. *The Diary of Anne Frank* has sold more than 20 million copies in many languages. *Zlata's Diary* likewise has hit the bestseller lists around the world. Comically, Zlata has even revived flagging Anne Frank sales, with booksellers cheerfully shifting copies of a new picturebook, *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary* (also Viking, by a strange coincidence, also £9.99) on the back of the Bosnian version.

But where Anne Frank was a subtle and involving writer, Zlata is not. It's merely our own childishness, our unwillingness to grapple with complexities, that has put this book on the top of our bestseller list.



Books & Bookmen

☐ THE COSY world of literary agenting has ever been a closed shop, and the Association of Authors' Agents was formed a dozen years ago to protect its interests.

One of the diktats of the AAA is that no member agent may knowingly approach the clients of another. This, of course, is ludicrous as it means that if an author has an incompetent agent, as most are, and the author doesn't realise this, he or she is in effect lumbered with that agent for life.

When David Godwin was decanted from the Jonathan Cape managing directorship last year, he signed up with Aitken, Stone and Wylie and began operating as an agent, naturally approaching the authors he'd published at Cape. One who defected was Jonathan Meades, who had been represented by Pat Kavanagh of Peters, Fraser & Dunlop.

Kavanagh complained to the AAA about Godwin's disgraceful behaviour, and the then president, Carole Blake, wrote to the Boy David telling him to behave. When the *Times* magazine published the allegation the other day, Godwin was incandescent with anger and threatened to sue the *Times* for suggesting anyone had complained about his behaviour.

Carole Blake's letter was apparently lost in the post. Godwin now accepts he was a naughty boy, and is quoted in the current *Bookseller*: "Some people aren't as well agented as they should be." What a suggestion!

■ *MUCH HUFFING and puffing about London's latest literary prize, the Steinbeck Award, to be given annually to a novelist under 40.*

The prize is worth £10,000, shrieks the publicity handout. But will the winning author be delighted to learn that he or she must give £5,000 of it to a charity of his or her choice — and the charity isn't allowed to be the winning author?

☐ EVERYONE commented on the bizarre shoes Mary Goldring wore in her Channel 4 report on publishing, but no one has commented on the editorial line taken by the programme with regard to Hodder Headline.

Noting the weird juxtaposition of religious titles, sex manuals and raunchy fiction on the Horror Headline shelves, Mary Goldring demonstrated the point to the nation with a panning shot of the classic Hodder edition of *Peter Pan* followed by the Bible followed by... bare female buttocks on a Headline paperback jacket, accompanied by Goldring's comment about "dubiously dirty books".

Meanwhile, the throat-cutting of longserving Hodder staff continues. Mark Adams, children's sales manager, and Vivien Garrett, personnel officer, have both been dispatched. Hatchetman's reign of terror clearly pleases his friends in the City as the shares continue to rise.

It is thought that he does not realise that a significant number of ex-employees still have shareholdings which are mostly comparatively small, and thus they are not unduly concerned about fluctuations in their value. But the *are* concerned about the treatment of ex-colleagues, and as shareholders are entitled to attend the annual general meeting. Sparks should fly.

'Bookworm'

footnotes

IT'S MUTUAL!

Bob-a-job chairman strikes again

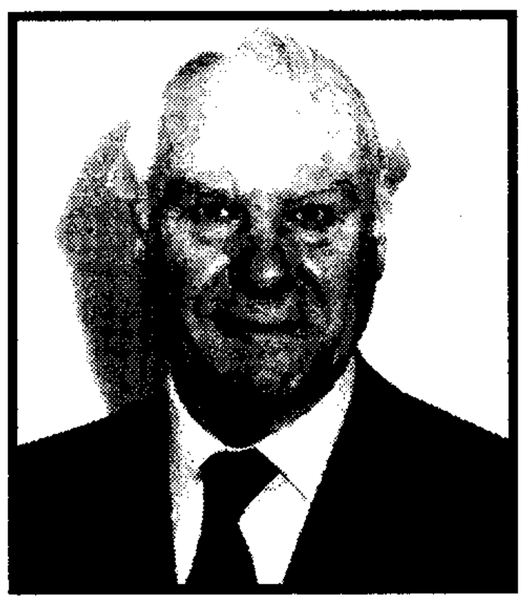
THE *EYE* was a little unfair to Sir Bob Balchin, chairman of the Conservative Party in the South East, when we named him in the last issue as chairman of the Grant Maintained Schools Centre and the Grant Maintained Schools Foundation, and a member of the Funding Agency for Schools.

We left out his chairmanship of the Grant Maintained Schools Mutual Ltd, which Sir Bob founded in October 1992 with Adrian Pritchard of High Wycombe.

The company is limited by guarantee (ie: it made no profits) and its company secretary is the big city insurance brokers, Indemnity Management Services. Its directors include David Meikle of Axminster, Devon, who is described as "an educationalist"; and several head teachers: Paul Strong of Welton, Lincs; Lucy Johnson from London; and Francis Harrison from Norfolk, to name but three.

Mr B.R. Porter, a director of Indemnity Management Services, tells *Private Eye* that 100 grant-maintained schools are insured with Grant Maintained Schools Mutual. He goes on: "As the GMSM as yet does not have enough members to provide sufficient funds to be authorised to trade as an insurance company in its own right, it has to underwrite the risks elsewhere. After considerable investigation, it made suitable arrangements for its members with the Sun Alliance."

The chairman of the Sun Alliance is Sir Christopher Benson, who has recently been



NO CONFLICT: Sir Christopher Benson

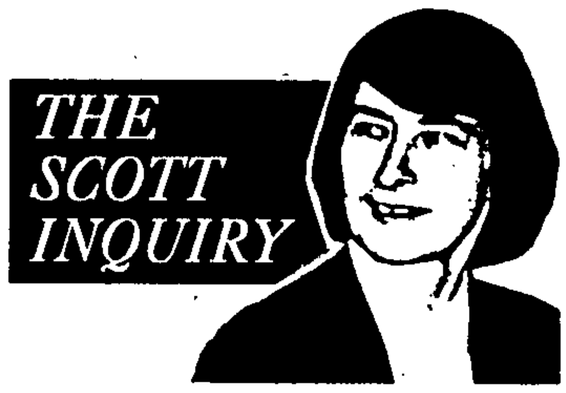
appointed chairman of the Funding Agency for Schools. The *Eye* asked the department of education (which provides hundreds of millions of taxpayers' pounds for all grant-maintained schools) if there might be a conflict of interest between a chairman of a funding agency dishing out public money to schools reinsured by his insurance company.

The reply was: "We are absolutely satisfied there is no conflict of interest. Every school has to get three quotes before it can appoint an insurance company."

The *Eye* asked Sir Christopher Benson the same question. Back came the answer from D.J.Miller, secretary of Sun Alliance: "I am writing to acknowledge your fax, addressed to our chairman. Sir Christopher is currently abroad, but he will see it on his return."

PS: In the five years before the 1992 election, Sun Alliance gave the Tory party £230,000.

Mr Moses supposes



■ THE MOST consistent activity at the Scott inquiry has been buck passing. Here's the most recent example.

Michael Heseltine says he was squeamish about signing a gagging order and only agreed to do so when he was promised the judge would be told of his reservations.

The judge was never told about those reservations. So who was to blame for that?

ALAN MOSES QC

The prosecuting counsel for HM customs, Alan Moses QC, who was in charge of the case?

Not at all. Mr Moses told Scott he had no inkling of Heseltine's reservations, so how could he pass them on?

The attorney-general, Sir Nicholas Lyell, who'd promised Heseltine his reservations would be passed on?

Not at all. Sir Nicholas told Scott his office told the treasury solicitor, who should have told Mr Moses, who should have told the judge.

What about the treasury solicitor, whose representative, Andrew Leithead, was heard by Scott on 17 February. He was asked by Presiley Baxendale for the inquiry: "Do you think you did discuss the matter (of Heseltine's reservations) with Mr Moses?"

He answered: "I cannot remember the exact conversation, but I'm sure that he was told. It may have been that he was told via the attorney-general's chambers, Miss Wheldon, perhaps. It is conceivable that he [Mr Moses] would have settled the certificate without knowing what the president's problems were."

In other words, he did know, but then again he might not have known. You pass my buck, I'll pass yours.

ARSON ABOUT

■ A BIT OF a record, even for delays in British justice, was set when the conviction of former West Yorks police constable Stuart Bower was quashed — 11 years after the offence he didn't commit.

Bower was convicted in 1985 of causing criminal damage to his father-in-law's boat. The evidence against him was that he might have benefited from the insurance money. Actually, he didn't.

INNOCENT: Stuart Bower

He was sent to prison for three months, and immediately started a long campaign to protest his innocence. He claimed he was the victim of a vendetta against him by fellow officers.

The case was looked into "extremely thoroughly" by a disciplinary tribunal from West Yorks police, by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and by the Police Complaints Authority. All three found nothing wrong with the conviction.

Bower then formally complained that the investigating officers had perverted the course of justice. His case went to an "outside force", Greater Manchester, who, after two more years, came up with a devastating indictment of the prosecution case. Unusually, the DPP petitioned the home secretary to send the case back to the court of appeal. It took the usual three years to get there this March.

The judges were confronted by a prosecution barrister, Anthony Gee QC, who said straight away that he and the crown wanted the appeal allowed and Mr Bower vindicated. Among the reasons for the U-turn was the clearest evidence that:

● Vital forensic reports establishing Bower's innocence had been denied to the defence by the prosecution.

● The police insistence that there was no deck hatch through which an outsider who did not know the boat could get into it to set it alight was, in the face of the evidence, incredible.

● There were two other young men in the area, known to the Greater Manchester inquiry, who were far more likely to have committed the crime.

The appeal judges unanimously quashed the conviction. Bower is, and always has been, innocent. But since he was chucked out of the force in 1985 after a wrongful conviction, his home has been repossessed and his career destroyed.

Bower's MP, Alice Mahon, is demanding a full home office inquiry into allegations of police perjury.

GRAND JAKARTA DICTATOR QUIZ

IN 1989-90 the value of British capital goods for export to the Indonesian dictatorship guaranteed by the Export Credit Guarantee department was £52m. Can you guess what the figure for the same goods was in 1992-93?

a). £104m
b) £208m
c). £312m
d). £448m.

Answer. d.

***NEWSFLASH** — Donna Cannon (see Donna Kebabbed last Eye) has not gone to prison. She got 100 hours community service, and is appealing against her blackmail conviction.*

OPTICA ILLUSION

ALAN CURTIS, the former chairman of Lotus, is well known for his startling business triumphs during the 1980s, chief among which was the discovery of the hidden entrepreneurial talents of Mark Thatcher.

But there is one enterprise he regrets: the Optica experiment.

Optica was a bubble-fronted light aircraft, designed as a "spy plane" specially suited for the police and the military.

The original plan was to produce hundreds of Opticas on 230 acres of prime land near Salisbury on the site of a wartime military aerodrome. The land was sold very cheaply by private treaty in 1982 by the ministry of defence. The lucky company that bought it was Edgley Aircraft, named after the plane's designer, John Edgley.

Much depended on the plane being snapped up by British police forces, so a special show was put on for a high-powered police delegation at Ringwood, Hampshire, in May 1985. The show was a disappointment: the plane crashed in mid-exhibition, killing the two police officers on board.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Edgley went into receivership later that year. The project was revived in 1986 by Alan Haikney, a Hampshire businessman and aviation enthusiast. But Haikney's hopes for his new company, which he called Brooklands Aircraft, were dashed in January 1987 when hangars said to be storing eight Opticas were burnt to the ground. The fire brigade report indicated arson, but no one has ever been arrested or charged.

Fortunately, the company did not come out of the fire too badly. The insurance payment was £1 million more than the original cost of buying the assets from the receiver.

In 1987, two businessmen joined the enterprise and the assets were shifted into another company called Brooklands Aerospace. The dynamic duo were Matthew Hudson, a Canadian lawyer turned property developer whose American Property Group Inc went spectacularly bust that same year, and Alan Curtis.

Hudson had been interested in Optica since well before the 1985 crash, as was his business associate, the former Metropolitan Police commissioner, Sir David McNee. Hudson and McNee were both directors of a company called Nimrod Securities, which later changed its name to Control Technology.

The heroic efforts of Hudson and Curtis to turn the Optica companies round were enthusiastically supported by the Duke of York, who visited the factory as soon as Mr Curtis asked him, and by the Tory MP for Salisbury, Robert Key, whose glittering career included 14 years as a teacher at Harrow school where one of the less successful pupils was Mark Thatcher.

In 1989 came the first real orders. Two Opticas were delivered to the United States. Alas, in 1990 Brooklands Aerospace called in the receiver. It owed £2.3 million to unsecured creditors and £304,000 in tax and insurance. The land at the airport was owned by various other companies, some of them offshore. There are proposals to develop it from Old Sarum Park Properties, two of whose original directors were Alan Curtis and Matthew Hudson. Curtis resigned in July 1992.

Mr Hudson was not put off aviation by this experience. In 1991, less than a year after the Optica disaster, he was back in the aviation business with an old friend of Alan Curtis, Lord Younger of Prestwick, former defence secretary and campaign organiser for Margaret Thatcher in the Tory party leadership election in 1990.

A new firm called PIK Holdings Ltd did a deal with British Aerospace to revive and run the international airport at Prestwick from which Lord Younger takes his name. The directors of PIK include Lord Younger, Matthew Hudson and Sir David McNee.

No Opticas have been made there, so PIK is making a profit.

FIT FOR A DUKE: Alan Curtis shows a spy plane to royal friend

Jail Bert Song

THE BRIDGE WATER CASE

A PRISONER has made a sworn statement alleging that Hubert Spencer confessed to the 1978 murder of the newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater, for which three men are still in prison.

The prisoner, whose name the *Eye* knows, says he met and befriended Spencer at North Sea Camp, Boston, in Lincolnshire, and that Spencer confessed to him several times.

There is little or no detail to the confession, and the man who made the statement has convictions for deception. After ringing the *Eye* with his story, however, he agreed to make a sworn statement to Jim Nichol, the solicitor for Jimmy Robinson, Vincent Hickey and Michael Hickey, who were convicted of the murder in 1979 and have been in prison ever since.

The solicitor visited the man in prison on 21 March and took a sworn statement. The man has since confirmed the statement to the *Eye*.

Hubert Spencer was convicted of shooting farmer Hubert Wilkes at Holloway House Farm, a few hundred yards from Yew Tree Farm, six weeks after the Hickeys and Robinson were convicted of the murder in 1979. A long string of coincidences linked Spencer to the murder: he was a frequent visitor to the farm where the boy died; he drove a blue Vauxhall Viva of the type seen going into the farm shortly before the murder; and he knew the newspaper boy. But in all the 14 years he has been in prison there has only been one other suggestion — from a fellow prisoner in 1981 — that he has confessed to the murder.

The worst that can be said about the new witness is that he is just as credible as Mervyn Ritter, a "confession witness" in the original trial. Ritter had spent most of his life in prison for lying and deception, and was described by more than one psychiatrist as a "pathological liar". Ritter gave evidence that Jim Robinson had confessed to the murder in prison. He was described by three judges at the appeal court as a "witness of truth". If Ritter is a witness of truth, this new witness is a paragon of virtue.

The witness says he has come forward because he wants to put right an injustice. He also says he regularly provides information to the police. He says he told his Scotland Yard controller of Spencer's confession and was told to say no more about it. Not long afterwards, he says, he was called down to speak to two men in plain clothes who said they were police officers from Staffordshire (where the murder inquiry was based). They told him, he says, to shut up and say no more.

The *Eye* asked Staffordshire police if two officers had visited the man, who was named, at North Sea Camp on a specific date in 1993, which was stated. To this very detailed inquiry the Staffordshire police came back within an hour with a very strange answer indeed: "No comment."

Water liberty!

■ THE WATER companies have come up with a typically imaginative form of cheating to boost their swollen profits and dividends.

In their accounts they proudly "make provision" for spending on "infrastructure" — mainly on the water and sewerage pipe network which is rapidly disintegrating. They then spend much less than the money they "provided" for.

The trade journal Water and Environment Management, which comes out next week, calculates that on sewage alone the water companies have spent £147 million less in the last three years than the sum they "provided" for in their accounts. As ever in such matters, Yorkshire Water leads the field by spending an amazing £108 million less than it "provided for".

What this means for the companies was spelled out last year in a bulletin written by Natwest Securities expert Robert Miller-Bakewell. He wrote: "In 1992-93, changes in the assumptions have enabled several companies to present better utility results than would otherwise have been the case." Miller-Bakewell singled out Severn Trent Water for "failing to signpost the accounting policy change — a shade tricky since it was made post the year end."

When the sewer renovation firms first warned Ofwat, the water industry "watchdog", about this nearly three years ago, they were promised that the underspend cheat would soon sort itself out. In fact, the cheating has got worse and worse in subsequent years. This year, the gap between provision and spending is expected to be higher than ever.

As Eye readers know, most water directors have doubled (or trebled) their salaries since privatisation and heaped hugely profitable share options on themselves into the bargain. Last year they paid themselves and their fellow shareholders £640 million in dividends — compared with £0 before privatisation.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

In the City

"THOROUGHLY and markedly dishonest" Roger Levitt is not content to limit his comeback ambitions to revolutionary steam cleaners. He is once again manoeuvring to have a say in the world of boxing now that his criminal and bankruptcy problems are behind him.

Levitt is increasingly spoken of as a behind the scenes — where else? — backer of former referee turned manager Mike Jacobs, who despite personal financial difficulties has suddenly put together a small stable of boxers.

Levitt had an elongated flirtation with boxing both before and after the collapse of his Levitt Group through World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis. Levitt, a man who loves the limelight, continued to be linked to Lewis long after his neighbour and bail provider, Panos Eliades, had bought out the Levitt Group's share of the Lewis management contract. Until a year ago Levitt was still involved as an adviser on commercial deals. But then it seems he and Lewis/Eliades fell out.

But no sooner had this happened when rumours, reported in *Eye* 833, started to circulate in the fight game that the then still bankrupt and supposedly penniless Levitt was linked to fellow insurance salesman Jacobs and his stable.

A one-time top referee, Jacobs had a row with the British Boxing Board of (No to Little) Control when he was demoted. Jacobs sued the board and lost, leaving court with a bill for costs of around £25,000 which he could not immediately pay. Jacobs still owes the board a substantial amount.

It was therefore puzzling when last year Jacobs, after obtaining a manager's licence, began pressing the board to be granted a promoter's licence. This the board refused, citing Jacobs' outstanding debt as evidence of a lack of the necessary minimal financial resources. However, Jacobs has persisted.

While these discussions were in progress the less than rich Jacobs — he has a black cab taxi licence — was suddenly acquiring a number of promising boxers, most from the United States or Africa.

Now fighters cost money up front and require a substantial investment in training and living costs which is only ever partly repaid from their purses and the investment is usually a loss-maker — even with a Lennox Lewis — unless and until they become world champion and earn a few big pay days.

So how was Jacobs — unable to repay the board its legal costs (his most recent offer was £2,000 a year over seven years!) — financing his managerial and promotional activities?

Interestingly enough one name mentioned early on was none other than property man Conrad Morris, involved with Eliades in the initial deal with Lennox Lewis. Morris just happens also to be close to Levitt. Indeed Morris is understood to have guaranteed payment on the £375,000 mortgage partly used to buy the Levitt family home in St John's Wood.

But then it seems that Morris, who unlike Levitt and Eliades loathes the limelight, faded from the scene. But not so his friend Roger the Dodger, who attended meetings with Jacobs to discuss future promotional arrangements. Quizzed about the Levitt link, Jacobs defends him as "a friend".

Unfortunately for the dishonest Dodger, at their last outing a month ago one of the Jacobs hopefuls, British boxer Kevin Lueshing, was knocked over contrary to the script. Still, his three African/Caribbean imports won.

Not that this means any payback to Levitt creditors who are owed £67 million. Not unless they can prove Levitt had a hidden interest prior to the automatic discharge of his three-year bankruptcy last December.

ALSO ON THE comeback trial is disgraced former Guinness chief executive and medical marvel Ernest (Alzheimer) Saunders, who is not restricting his business return to car phones.

He is said to be lending his much greater knowledge and expertise to assisting City-based insurance brokers Abbey Legal Protection, presumably on the same "strategic and marketing aspects" as he helps Carphone Warehouse. After all, there can be few businessmen who know more about how to make the legal system work for you than Ernest Saunders.

Abbey Legal Protection was formed only three years ago — after its consultant Saunders was sent to Ford for fraud. Three years ago, a shambling, mumbling Saunders persuaded a sympathetic court of appeal that he had irreversible Alzheimer's Disease, suffered from senile dementia and therefore should be excused his five-year prison sentence. Completely fooled, the judges cut the sentence for the Guinness share ramp operation in half, which resulted in Saunders' release from Ford after just 10 months.

His condition responded so remarkably to this decision that Saunders is not only fully recovered — a medical first — but well enough to take his case to the European court of human rights in a bid to have the verdict itself quashed.

There are those who might consider that it is the legal system itself that needs protection from people like Ernest Saunders! But his business comeback is being watched with more than academic interest by a firm of solicitors who once assisted in his defence and are still waiting for him to pay their bill. Time to call Abbey Legal Protection?

NORTHERN CYPRUS, already bulging with an ever-increasing number of fellow fugitives and hangers-on surrounding Asil Nadir, received a further boost over Easter with the arrival of numerous Nadir advisers and fugitive relatives. Most enjoy the hospitality of the Polly Peck-owned but Nadir-hijacked Jasmine Court and Palm Beach hotels.

Nadir's legal advisers are said to be gearing up for the long awaited "abuse of process" application to the high court, now said to be due within weeks. Legal experts find it hard to believe this will receive more than short shrift with Nadir still outside the jurisdiction. But that matters not in the Nadir scheme of things, because then the door to Strasbourg and the European court of human rights will be open.

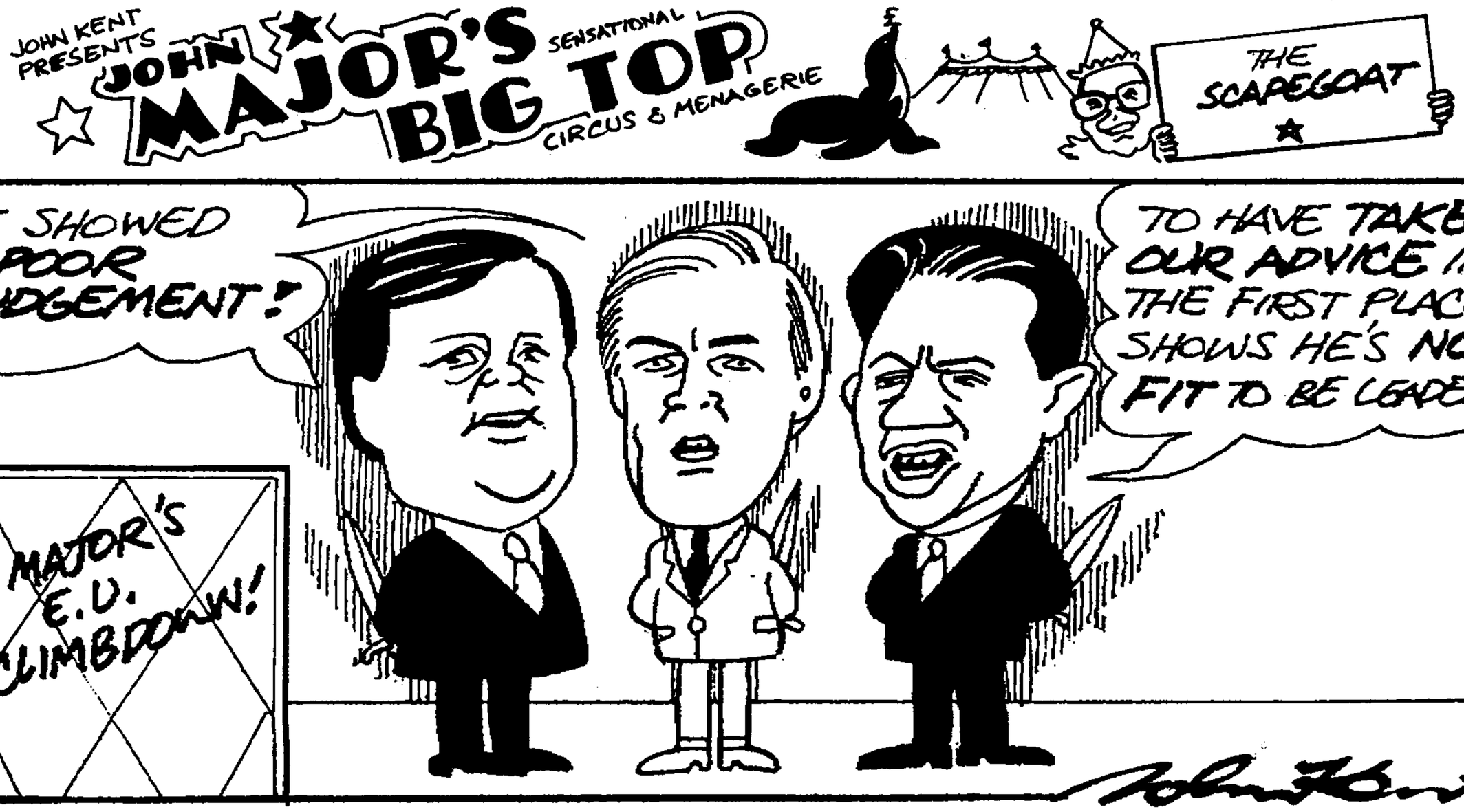
Nadir is now said to have added John Beveridge — the man who reputedly made a million from the Lonrho/Fayed war — to the list of high price QCs on his payroll. Anthony Scrivener, said to have been available at his Northern Cyprus home over Easter for consultations, and David Pannick have already been recruited. Polly Peck creditors and Turkish Cypriot pensioners can only wonder how this legal bandwagon is fuelled.

Equally they can wonder how the Nadir social security system is funded. Each week some 100 million Turkish lira (£2,500) is said to be handed out to the ever growing list of claimants seated round the hotel pools at the Jasmine Court, Palm Beach and Olive Tree (owned by Nadir's sister).

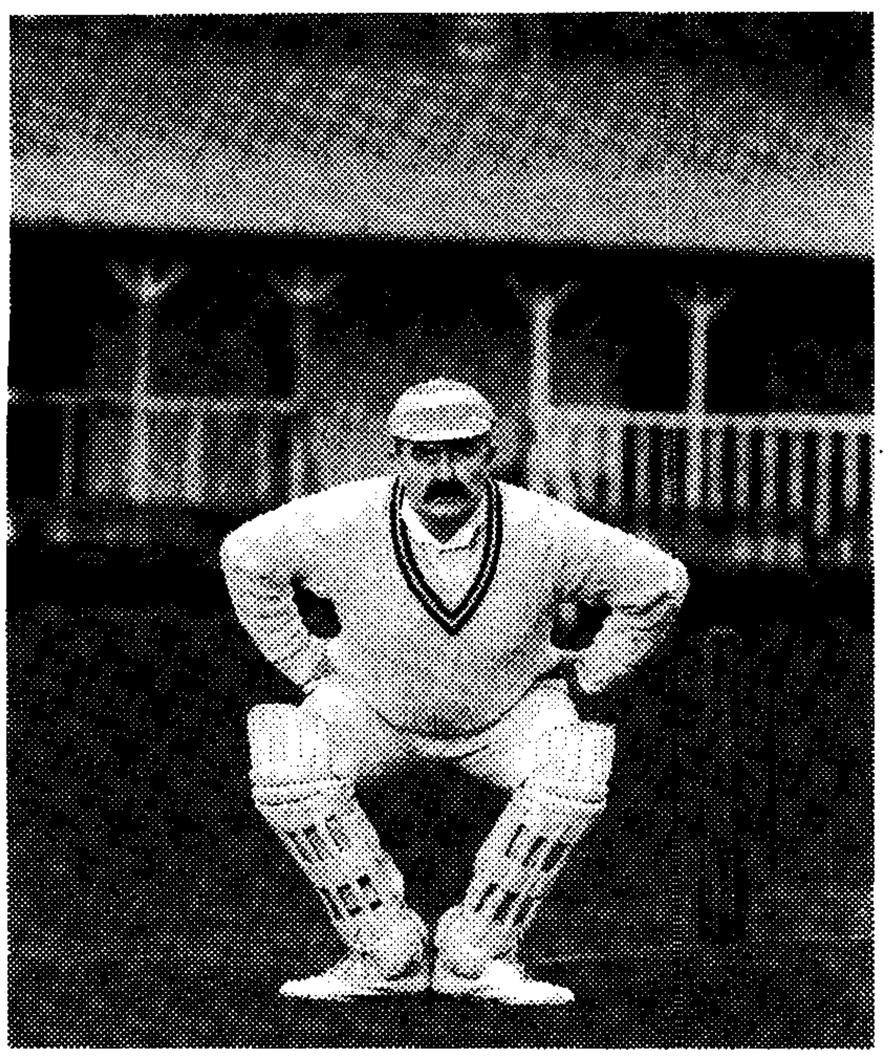
Already on the tab are Michael Francis, Wendy Welsher and the latest "SFO plot" witness, Michael O'Keefe, plus David Hamilton and Peter Dimond, who arranged Nadir's escape, together with former key facilitator Elizabeth Forsyth and ex-secretary Aisling Daley. But after almost a year of sitting in the sun doing nothing it seems Hamilton and Dimond at least are starting to become somewhat restless. Not least because of concern about just how secure they may be in the changed local political climate.

There has been talk of a mass return to Britain confronting the Serious Farce Office with the ticklish question of whether to arrest or not those technically wanted for either assisting the Polly Peck fraud (Forsyth), aiding Nadir's escape (Hamilton and Dimond) or perjury (Francis and Welsher). Whether all or any of the Nadir gang decide to make their move may well depend on what their paymaster and protector decides as the anniversary of his great escape nears.

'Slicker'

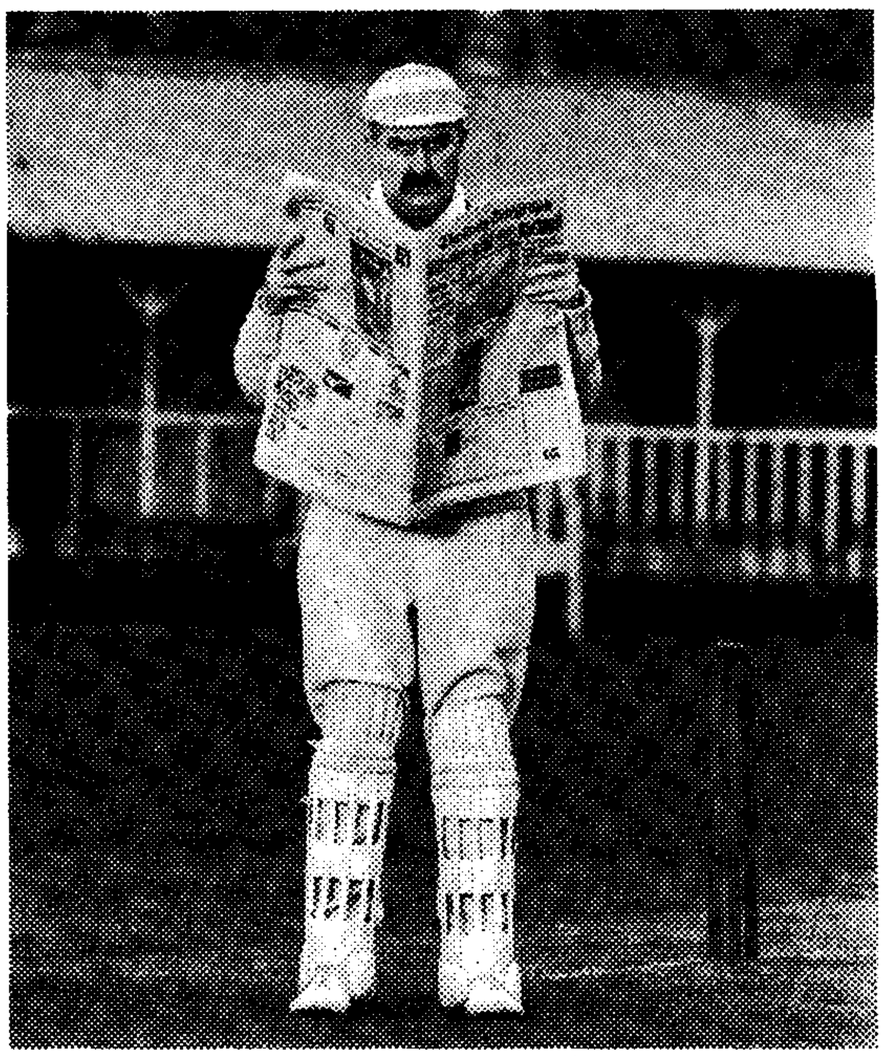

JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP
CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE SCAPEGOAT
HE SHOWED POOR JUDGEMENT!
TO HAVE TAKEN OUR ADVICE IN THE FIRST PLACE SHOWS HE'S NOT FIT TO BE LEADER!
MAJOR'S E.U. CLIMBDOWN!
John Kent

How to play cricket.



WARM UP

There's not much time left to prepare for The Daily Telegraph's Fantasy Cricket.

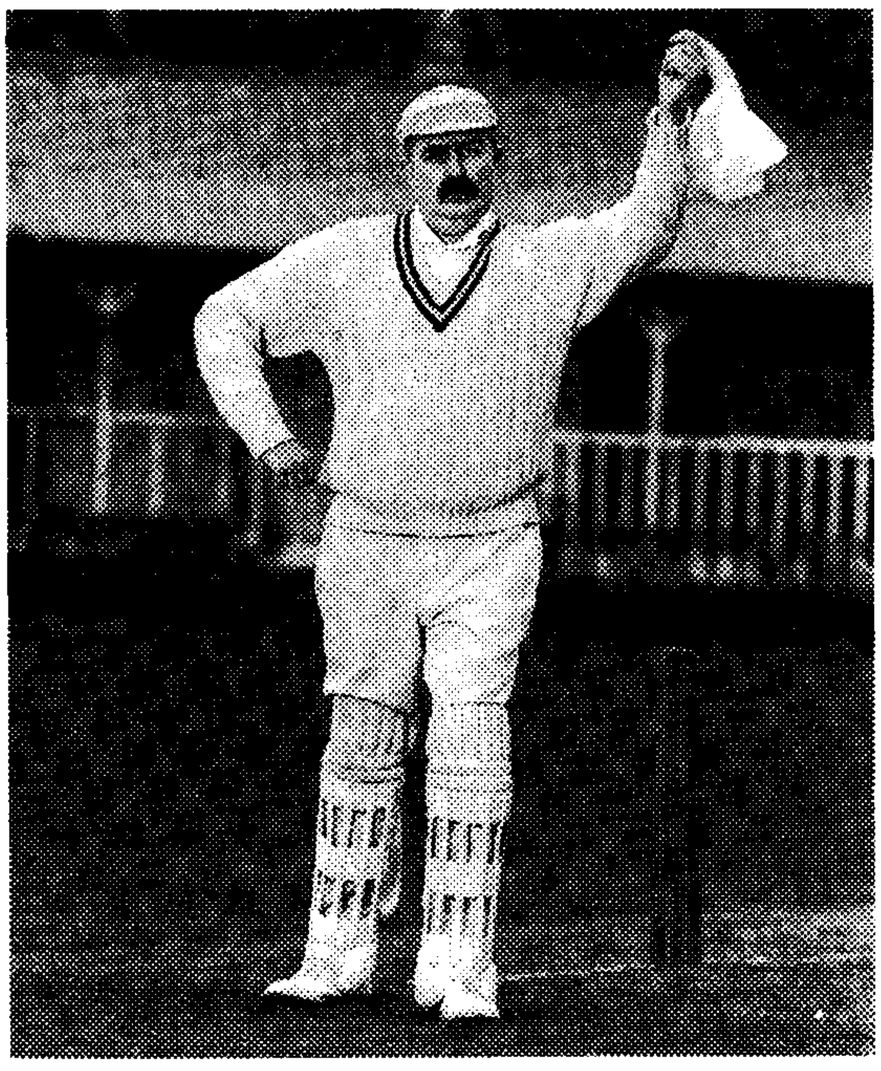


OPEN FRIDAY'S TELEGRAPH

Read the views of Christopher Martin-Jenkins, Imran Khan, Clive Ellis, Mark Nicholas, Simon Hughes and Tim Rice.

KEEP HEAD DOWN

Or using your own skill and judgement, pick a fantasy team from over 250 county cricketers.



CELEBRATE WIN

Play commences Friday April 1 sharp. Anything else just isn't cricket.

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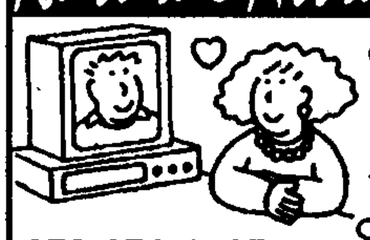

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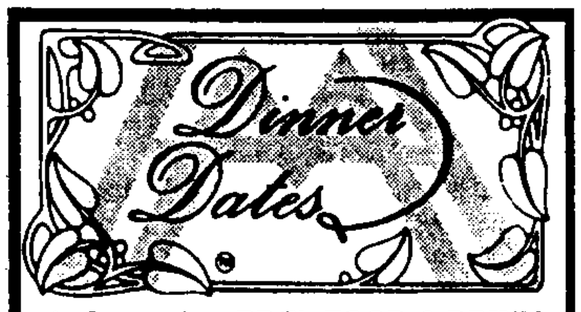

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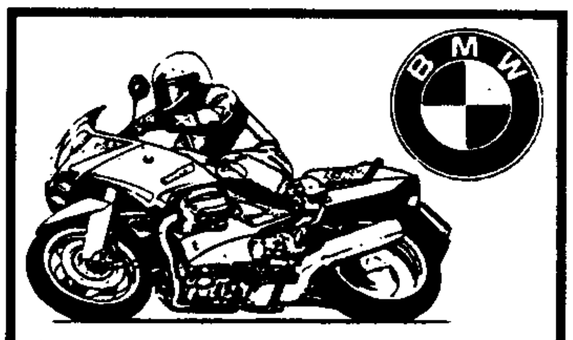

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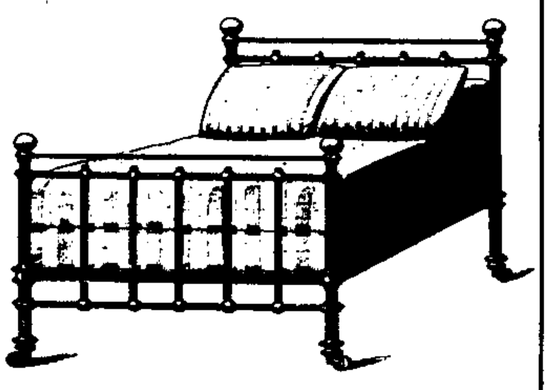

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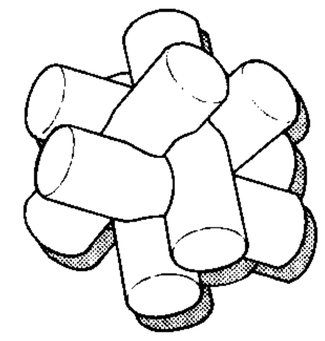

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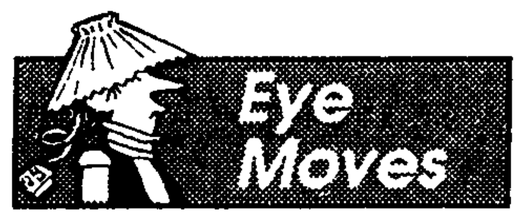

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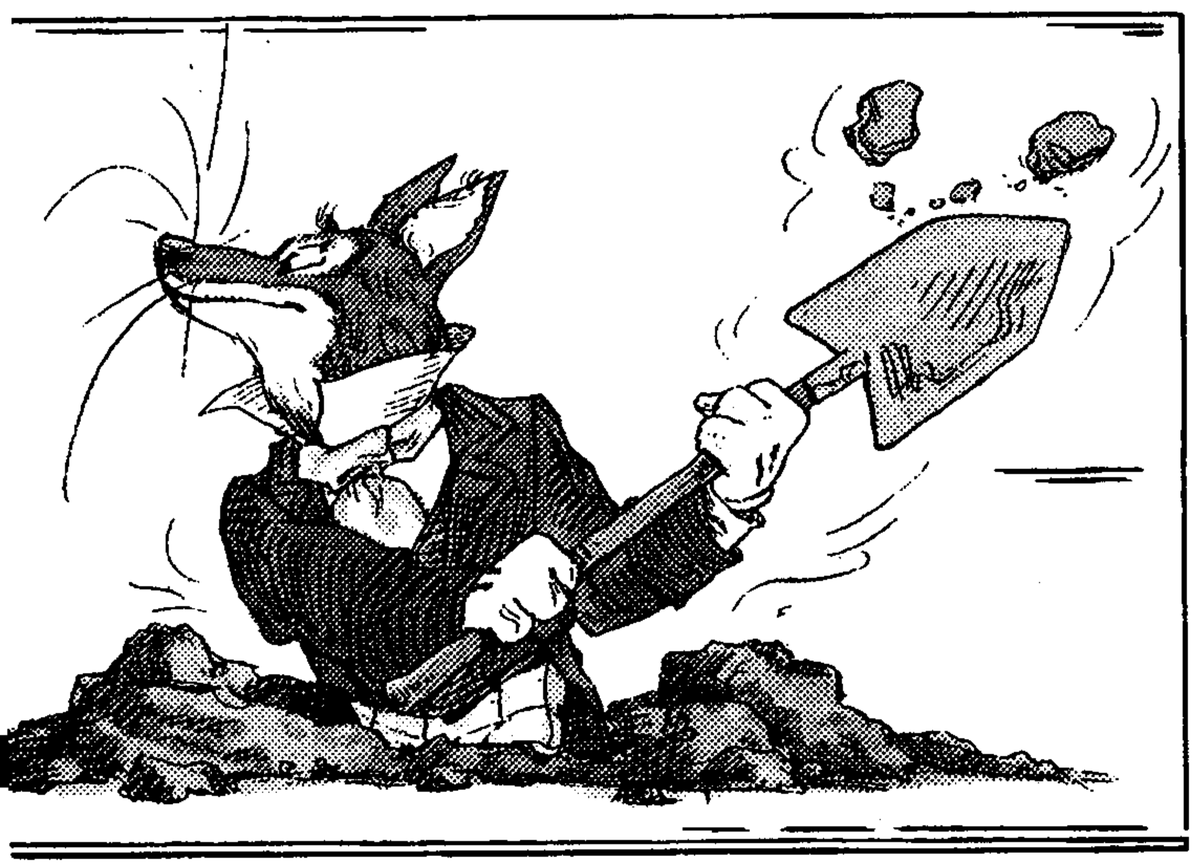

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ATTACHED LADY, 39, seeks medic, soldier, for gentle friendship. Midlands. Box 4143.

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THOROUGHLY DECENT sensitive, single chap, 29. Professional solvent manager. Lots of interests, but no-one to share them with. Seeks petite lady 23-33 who wouldn't dream of answering an ad. Upbeat letter preferred. Midlands. Box 4543.

SPIRITED REDHEAD, 25, seeks good humoured prof. man. London. Box 4643.

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PRETTY BROKEN-HEARTED girl seeks nice guy (under 35) with glue. London area. Box 5443

EXCITING MALE, 45, 6'2", fit, honest, tied, successful but insolvent, seeks long term younger London lover; ns, 5'8" plus, possibly also attached, for discreet high octane relationship. Box 5543.

MY OLD MAN, He's a singer in the park. He's a walker in the rain. He's a dancer in the dark/ Scrumptious London writer wants lovely, creative, 40+ man to be her old man. Photo appreciated. Box 2543.

SINGLE *MAN, 30s,* *into* humour, music, seeking similar lady 20s/30s for friendship, romance, North Midlands. Box 2643.

DOWN TO EARTH free spirit seeks unusual, normal man, 38-45. Box 2743.

RESPONSIBLE, SEPARATED professional male, 43, slim, good sense of humour, appreciates women, seeks attractive sensual lady for uncomplicated friendship. Bournemouth. Box 2843.

JOHN MAJOR LOOK-ALIKE, young, slim, 43, generous, affectionate, seeks attractive, intelligent outside caterer for discreet uninhibited excitement. Devon. Box 2943.

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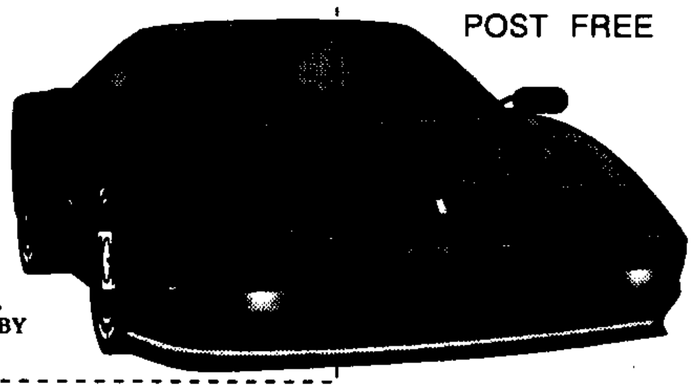

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